Better Homes & Gardens

Christmas RECIPES™

The Best Dishes of the Season

PERFECT MEATS
TURKEY, PRIME RIB, HAM

ALL THE SIDES
CASSEROLES, OVEN-FREE VEGGIES

SWEETS & TREATS
PIES, CAKES, COOKIES, CANDIES

Coconut-Pecan Layer Cake with Cream Cheese Frosting

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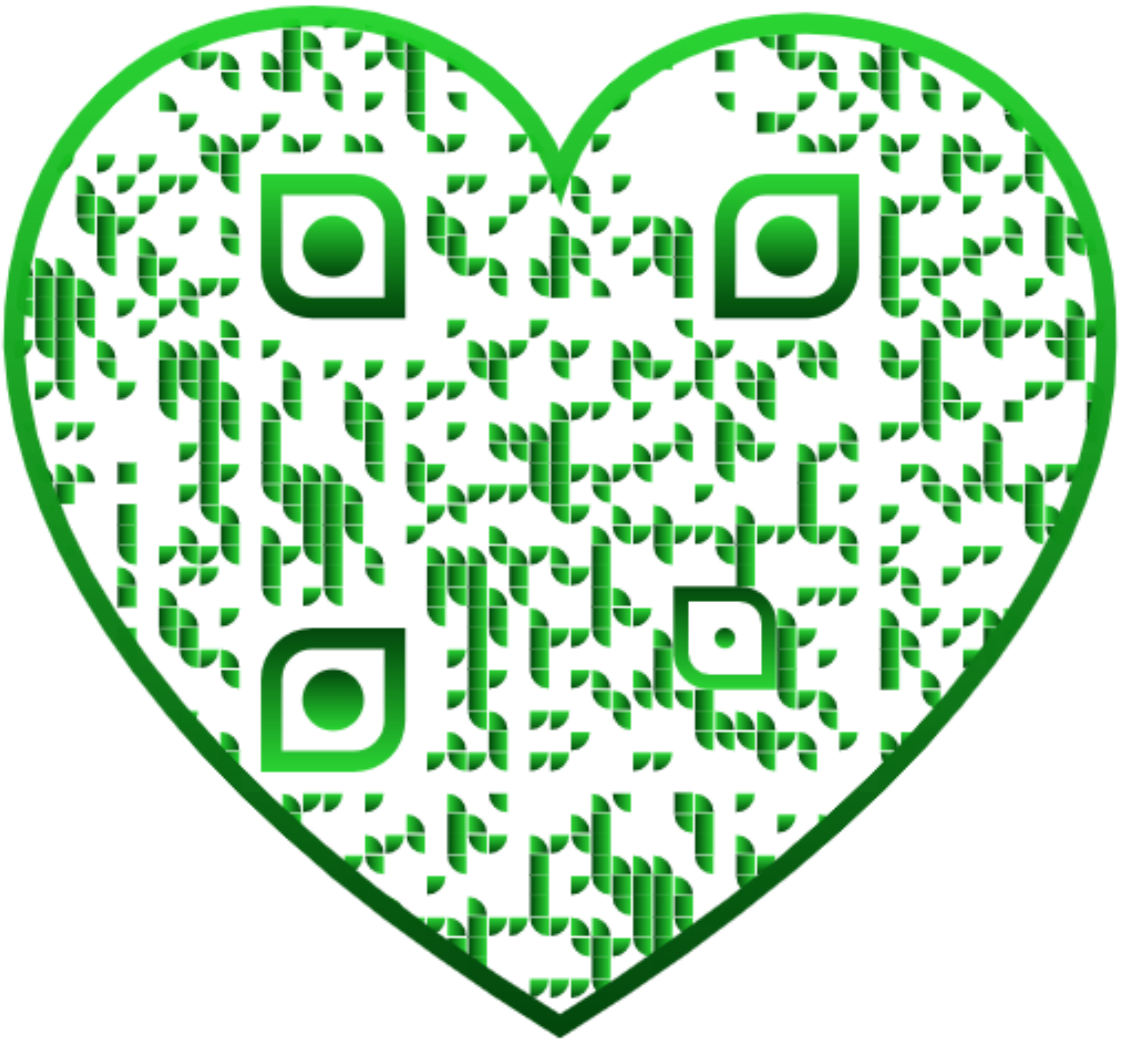

FOR THE LOVE OF CHEESE

Elsie
Borden
BETTER WITH BORDEN

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One cake. Three *festive* ways.

Indulgent ... check.
Adorable ... check.
Easy ... check.
The hardest part?
Choosing only one of
these cute decorating
options to be
the Christmas star.

Rosemary Forest Cake

Using an offset spatula (info, *p. 61*), apply a thin layer of Cream Cheese Frosting *(p. 4)* around the outside of cake. Spoon a small pile of frosting on cake top; use an offset spatula to create billowy swoops. For evergreen trees, place rosemary sprigs (with woody stems) upside down in frosting in one or more clusters. Add a fawn-shape Cardamom Gingerbread Cookie *(p. 5)* at the base of the cake. To create a snowy effect, use a sieve to sift powdered sugar over cake.

Wreath-Topped Cake

Using an offset spatula (info, *p. 61*), apply a thin layer of Cream Cheese Frosting *(below)* around the outside of cake and a thicker layer on top of cake. To make a wreath, place rosemary sprigs around the top edge of cake. Place fresh cranberries in small clusters on the wreath. To create a snowy effect, use a sieve to sift powdered sugar over cake.

Coconut-Pecan Layer Cake

HANDS ON 40 minutes
BAKE 35 minutes at 350°F
COOL 1 hour

- **5 eggs, room temperature**
- **2 cups all-purpose flour**
- **1 tsp. baking soda**
- **½ cup salted butter, softened**
- **½ cup shortening**
- **2 cups sugar**
- **1 tsp. vanilla**
- **1 cup buttermilk**
- **1 cup flaked coconut**
- **½ cup finely chopped toasted pecans**
- **1 or 2 recipes Cream Cheese Frosting *(below right)***

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease and flour three 8-inch round cake pans. Separate eggs. In a bowl stir together flour and baking soda.
2. In an extra-large bowl beat butter and shortening with a mixer on medium 30 seconds. Add sugar; beat until mixture is combined. Add egg yolks and vanilla; beat on medium until combined. Add flour mixture and buttermilk alternately, beating on low after each addition just until combined. Fold in coconut and pecans.
3. Thoroughly wash beaters. In a medium bowl beat egg whites on medium until stiff peaks form. Fold one-third of the egg whites into batter to lighten; fold in remaining egg whites. Spread batter into prepared pans.
4. Bake until a toothpick comes out clean, 35 minutes. Cool cake layers in pans 10 minutes. Remove layers from pans; cool on wire racks.
5. Place one cake layer, bottom side up, on a plate. Spread with a layer of Cream Cheese Frosting. Top with second cake layer, bottom side down. Spread with another layer of frosting. Top with remaining cake layer, bottom side up; spread top and sides of cake with remaining frosting. Store in refrigerator up to 2 days. **Makes 16 servings.**
PER SERVING *646 cal, 33 g fat (14 g sat fat), 104 mg chol, 267 mg sodium, 84 g carb, 2 g fiber, 69 g sugars, 6 g pro.*

Cream Cheese Frosting

For a generously frosted cake, prepare two recipes Cream Cheese Frosting.
START TO FINISH 20 minutes

- **1 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened**
- **½ cup salted butter, softened**
- **2 tsp. vanilla**
- **5½ to 6 cups powdered sugar**

In a large bowl beat cream cheese, butter, and vanilla with a mixer on medium until light and fluffy**.** Gradually beat in enough of the powdered sugar to reach spreading consistency. Store frosted cake in refrigerator. **Makes 3½ cups.**

Cardamom Gingerbread Cookies

HANDS ON 45 minutes **CHILL** 2 hours **BAKE** 9 minutes per batch at 375°F

1 cup salted butter
3¼ cups all-purpose flour
1 Tbsp. ground cinnamon
1 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. ground ginger
½ tsp. ground cardamom
½ tsp. salt
1 cup granulated sugar
½ cup packed brown sugar
1 egg
¼ cup milk
¼ cup molasses
Tube of purchased white frosting (info, *p. 61*) (optional)

1. In a 10-inch skillet heat butter over medium-low until butter turns golden brown, 10 to 15 minutes. Remove from heat. Pour into a large bowl. Chill until butter is the texture of softened butter.

2. In a medium bowl stir together flour, cinnamon, baking soda, ginger, cardamom, and salt.

3. Beat brown butter with a mixer on medium 30 seconds. Add both sugars; beat until combined, scraping bowl as needed. Beat in egg, milk, and molasses. Gradually beat in as much of the flour mixture as you can with the mixer. Stir in any remaining flour mixture. Divide dough in half. Cover and chill until easy to handle, 1 hour.

4. Preheat oven to 375°F. On a 15×12-inch piece of parchment paper use a floured rolling pin to roll one portion of dough at a time to just slightly more than ⅛ inch thick. Using 3- to 3½-inch cookie cutters, cut out dough, pulling scraps away from cutouts. Transfer parchment with cutouts to a cookie sheet. (This prevents cookies from tearing or stretching when you transfer them to cookie sheets.) Reroll scraps as needed on additional sheets of parchment.

5. Bake until edges are firm and bottoms are very light brown, 9 to 10 minutes. Remove from cookie sheet; cool on a wire rack.

6. If you like, use the tube of white frosting with a round tip to decorate cookies with small dots and accents.

Makes about 40 cookies.

PER COOKIE *159 cal, 5 g fat (3 g sat fat), 17 mg chol, 102 mg sodium, 29 g carb, 0 g fiber, 21 g sugars, 0 g pro.*

Snowy Wonderland Cake

Using an offset spatula (info, *p. 61*), spread a thick layer of Cream Cheese Frosting *(opposite)* around the outsides and top of cake. Frost outsides of sugar ice cream cones with Cream Cheese Frosting, then sprinkle with white decorative sugar, coconut, and/or white sprinkles. Place on top of cake. Add fawn-shape Cardamom Gingerbread Cookies *(above)* at the base and on top of cake. Place fresh thyme sprigs and sage leaves among the trees and around the cake base. To create a snowy effect, use a sieve to sift powdered sugar over cake.

We used a fawn-shape cookie cutter for our cutouts, but you can use cutters in the shape of any woodland creatures.

quick bites

The best hosts know when to take a shortcut. Cut yourself some slack with these crowd-pleasing appetizers.

Chile-Lime Mixed Nuts

Preheat oven to 300°F. In a large bowl beat 1 **egg white** until frothy. Add two 8.75-oz. cans **mixed nuts** (5 cups total) and toss to coat. In a small bowl combine ½ cup **sugar** and 1 Tbsp. **chile-lime seasoning** (such as Tajín). Add to nuts and toss to coat. Spread in a greased shallow baking pan. Bake 40 minutes, stirring once. Let cool. **Makes 5 cups.**

PER ¼ CUP *172 cal, 13 g fat (2 g sat fat), 0 mg chol., 182 mg sodium, 10 g carb, 2 g fiber, 6 g sugars, 5 g pro.*

Tomato-Goat Cheese Crostini

Preheat oven to 425°F. In a 1-qt. baking dish combine 1 cup halved **cherry tomatoes;** 8 oz. **goat cheese,** crumbled; 1 Tbsp. olive oil; and 2 **garlic cloves,** minced. Bake until tomatoes are softened and cheese is almost melted, 15 minutes. Spread on **toasted baguette slices. Makes 16 crostini.**

PER CROSTINI *90 cal, 4 g fat (2 g sat fat), 7 mg chol, 143 mg sodium, 9 g carb, 0 g fiber, 1 g sugars, 4 g pro.*

Crab-Stuffed Peppadews

Drain one 14-oz. jar **Peppadew peppers** and pat peppers dry. Cut a small slice from bottom of peppers so they stand upright. In a medium bowl stir together one 5.2-oz. pkg. **semisoft cheese with garlic and fine herbs** and one 6-oz. can drained **refrigerated crabmeat** (chop any large pieces). Transfer to a resealable plastic bag; snip off corner. Fill peppers with crab mixture. Top with **fresh chives. Makes about 40 stuffed peppers.**

PER STUFFED PEPPER *28 cal, 2 g fat (1 g sat fat), 6 mg chol, 66 mg sodium, 3 g carb, 0 g fiber, 2 g sugars, 1 g pro.*

Black Bean Nacho Bites

In a 10-inch skillet fry ten 4-inch **corn tortillas,** in batches, in ⅓ cup vegetable oil 2 minutes on medium-high, turning once. In a bowl mash 2 **avocados** with 2 Tbsp. lemon juice and a pinch each of salt and black pepper. Spread over tortillas. Top with **black bean-mango salsa** (or other salsa) and chopped **fresh cilantro. Makes 10 nacho bites.**

PER NACHO BITE *118 cal, 9 g fat (1 g sat fat), 0 mg chol, 95 mg sodium, 10 g carb, 3 g fiber, 1 g sugars, 1 g pro.*

Feta-Cucumber Kabobs

Cut one 10-oz. **cucumber** into ¾-inch chunks. Cut one 8-oz. block **feta** (tomato-basil flavor or plain) into ¾-inch squares. Thread cucumber, feta, and pitted **Kalamata olives** onto 4- to 6-inch skewers. Sprinkle with 2 tsp. **dried Greek seasoning** and drizzle with olive oil. **Makes 20 skewers.**

PER SKEWER *39 cal, 3 g fat (1 g sat fat), 8 mg chol, 214 mg sodium, 1 g carb, 0 g fiber, 0 g sugars, 2 g pro.*

Breaded Bruschetta Shrimp

In a medium bowl combine 1 lb. **jumbo peeled, deveined shrimp** and 3 Tbsp. **dried tomato pesto;** toss to coat. In another medium bowl combine ½ cup **panko** and 1 Tbsp. dried tomato pesto. Add shrimp to panko mixture and toss to coat. Place on a foil-lined baking sheet. Broil 4 to 5 inches from heat, turning once, until shrimp are opaque, 4 to 6 minutes. Serve with additional pesto. **Makes 20 to 25 shrimp.**

PER SHRIMP *26 cal, 1 g fat (0 g sat fat), 29 mg chol, 161 mg sodium, 2 g carb, 2 g pro.*

Salsa Verde-Chicken Empanadas

Preheat oven to 400°F. In a medium bowl combine ¾ cup chopped **rotisserie chicken,** ⅓ cup crumbled **queso fresco,** and 2 Tbsp. **salsa verde.** In a small bowl lightly beat 1 egg. Using a 4-inch round cutter, cut one 14.1-oz. pkg. rolled **refrigerated piecrust** (2 crusts) into circles, rerolling scraps as necessary (you'll make 6 circles per crust). Transfer circles to a baking sheet. Spoon 1 Tbsp. filling onto each pastry circle. Brush edges with egg and fold pastry over filling. Crimp edge with a fork. Brush egg on top. Bake 15 minutes. If you like, serve empanadas with additional salsa. **Makes 12 empanadas.**

PER EMPANADA *175 cal, 9 g fat (4 g sat fat), 29 mg chol, 354 mg sodium, 16 g carb, 0 g fiber, 1 g sugars, 4 g pro.*

If you like, swap hollowed-out cherry tomatoes or mini sweet peppers for the Peppadew peppers in Crab-Stuffed Peppadews.

To make these Black Bean Nacho Bites even easier, use purchased tostada shells instead of frying your own tortillas.

Everything Bagel Pastry-Wrapped Sausages

Preheat oven to 425°F. In a small bowl lightly beat 1 egg. Thaw half of a 17.3-oz. pkg. **puff pastry** (1 sheet). Cut into eight even strips (about 1 inch each). Spread each strip with 1 tsp. **whole grain mustard** and wrap around a **fully cooked chicken sausage link.** Brush each with egg and sprinkle with 1 to 2 tsp. **everything bagel seasoning.** Place on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Bake until golden brown, 16 to 18 minutes. Cool slightly. Cut each wrapped sausage into four pieces. **Makes 32 sausage bites.**

PER SAUSAGE BITE *68 cal, 4 g fat (1 g sat fat), 23 mg chol, 207 mg sodium, 4 g carb, 0 g fiber, 0 g sugars, 5 g pro.*

Text by Maggie Glisan

COCKTAIL + APPETIZER

Holiday Cheer

Season's gatherings call for bright cocktails (or mocktails) to keep the mixing and mingling in motion. Add an easy snack pairing to each sipper and it's a true party!

Big-Batch Pumpkin Spice White Russians

START TO FINISH 10 minutes

- 1 **750-ml bottle vodka**
- 2 **cups cold brew coffee**
- 1 **cup half-and-half**
- 1 **cup coffee liqueur**
- ½ **cup pumpkin spice beverage syrup**
- **Ice**
- **Pumpkin pie spice**

Combine vodka, coffee, half-and-half, coffee liqueur, and pumpkin spice syrup in a pitcher or beverage dispenser. Stir well to combine. Serve in rocks glasses over ice sprinkled with pumpkin pie spice. **Makes 12 servings** (6 oz. each).
PER SERVING *267 cal, 2 g fat (1 g sat fat), 7 mg chol, 16 mg sodium, 16 g carb, 16 g sugars, 0 g fiber, 1 g pro.*

ADD A SIMPLE SNACK

melted chocolate + pretzels + dried cranberries + pistachios

Pour melted chocolate into the bottoms of silicone muffin tins. Place a pretzel in the chocolate and sprinkle with cranberries and pistachios. Place in the fridge to firm up.

Pear Martinis

START TO FINISH 10 minutes

- Lemon wedge
- 1 recipe Spiced Cocktail Sugar *(above left)*
- ½ cup (4 oz.) pear-infused vodka or brandy
- 2 tsp. spiced rum
- 1 Tbsp. (½ oz.) fresh lemon juice
- 1 Tbsp. (½ oz.) Simple Syrup *(below)*
- 2 cups ice cubes
- Thin slices of pear

1. Run lemon wedge around the rim of two chilled martini or coupe glasses. Dip rims in Spiced Cocktail Sugar.

2. In a cocktail shaker combine pear vodka, spiced rum, lemon juice, and Simple Syrup. Add 2 cups ice cubes; cover and shake until very cold. Strain into prepared glasses. Garnish each with a pear slice. **Makes 2 servings** (3½ oz. each).

SIMPLE SYRUP In a screw-top jar combine 2 Tbsp. sugar and 2 Tbsp. water. Screw on lid and shake until sugar is dissolved.

PER SERVING *183 cal, 0 g fat, 0 mg chol, 1 mg sodium, 12 g carb, 11 g sugars, 0 g fiber, 0 g pro.*

ADD A SIMPLE SNACK

toasted baguette slices + goat cheese + pumpkin butter + pomegranate seeds + black pepper

Zero-Proof Cranberry-Lime Mules

START TO FINISH 10 minutes

- ½ cup fresh or frozen whole cranberries
- 2 lime wedges
- 2 tsp. sugar
- ¼ cup (2 oz.) nonalcoholic spirits (such as Seedlip or Wilderton) (optional)
- 1 12-oz. can "extra spicy" ginger beer, chilled
- Lime slices

1. In a cocktail shaker or mixing glass combine cranberries, lime wedges, and sugar. Muddle until cranberries have released some liquid and mixture smells limey, about 1 minute. Add nonalcoholic spirits, if using, and 1 cup *ice*. Shake or stir until very cold.
2. Strain mixture between two rocks or highball glasses or mugs. Fill with crushed ice and top with ginger beer. Stir, garnish with additional cranberries and lime slices, and serve. **Makes 2 servings** (7½ oz. each).

PER SERVING *117 cal, 0 g fat, 0 mg chol, 5 mg sodium, 30 g carb, 29 g sugars, 0 g fiber, 0 g pro.*

ADD A SIMPLE SNACK

purchased phyllo shells + small wedge of brie + chopped pear + honey + fresh thyme

When it comes to serving, almost any surface goes (we love the look of layered cutting boards). Also consider a large, flat platter or serving tray.

Ready. Set. Graze.

The merriest way to top off Christmas morning? Bring out a brunch board! Bake a batch of epic scones (just the way you like them) and serve with maple butter, clotted cream, and jam. Include fresh fruit, crisp bacon, and boiled eggs.

Breakfast Scones

HANDS ON 20 minutes **FREEZE** 5 minutes **BAKE** 20 minutes at 400°F

- ½ **cup salted butter (1 stick), frozen**
- 2¾ **cups all-purpose flour**
- ½ **cup granulated sugar**
- 1 **Tbsp. baking powder**
- ½ **tsp. salt**
- ¾ **cup heavy cream**
- 2 **eggs, lightly beaten**
- 1 **tsp. vanilla or vanilla bean paste**
- **Mix-Ins *(far right)* (optional)**
- **Coarse sugar**
- **Maple Butter *(above right),***
- **Clotted Cream *(right),***
- **and/or jam (optional)**

1. Preheat oven to 400°F. Using the coarse side of a box grater, quickly grate frozen butter onto a plate lined with waxed paper. Return butter to freezer. In a large bowl stir together flour, granulated sugar, baking powder, and salt. Add butter to flour mixture; toss quickly with a fork to separate and coat grated butter. Make a well in the center of flour mixture.

2. In a small bowl combine cream, eggs, and vanilla. Add cream mixture all at once to flour mixture. Add Mix-Ins (if using). Using a fork, stir just until moistened.

3. Turn dough out onto a lightly floured surface. Knead dough by folding and gently pressing four to six strokes or until dough holds together in a ragged ball (dough will be a bit sticky). Pat or roll into a 12-inch square. Fold square into thirds like a letter. Fold in short ends to create a square. Place on a floured plate in the freezer 5 minutes.

4. Divide dough in half. Pat or lightly roll each dough half into a 6-inch circle. Cut each circle into six wedges.

5. Place wedges 2 inches apart on a very large parchment-lined baking sheet. Brush with additional cream and sprinkle with coarse sugar. Bake until bottoms are golden, about 20 minutes. Remove; cool on a wire rack. If you like, serve with Maple Butter, Clotted Cream, and/or jam.

Makes 12 scones.

PER SCONE *425 cal, 29 g fat (18 g sat fat), 114 mg chol, 309 mg sodium, 37 g carb, 1 g fiber, 15 g sugars, 6 g pro.*

MAPLE BUTTER

In a small bowl beat together ½ cup softened salted butter, 3 Tbsp. pure maple syrup, and ¼ tsp. vanilla bean paste or vanilla until smooth. Store, covered, in the fridge up to 1 week.

CLOTTED CREAM

Preheat oven to 175°F. Pour 2 cups heavy cream (not ultra-pasteurized) into a glass or ceramic baking dish. Bake on the middle rack of the oven 12 hours. Remove from oven and cool completely. Cover and chill at least 8 hours. Gently skim solidified cream from surface and transfer to a jar (discard the liquid remaining in the dish). Cover; store clotted cream in the fridge up to 1 week.

MIX-INS

Customize your scones with your favorite flavor boost. Gently fold in one of these ingredients after stirring in cream mixture in Step 2.

1 cup fresh or frozen blueberries or raspberries and ½ tsp. lemon zest

1 cup fresh or frozen cranberries and ½ tsp. orange zest

½ cup chopped fresh or frozen strawberries and ½ cup chopped fresh or frozen rhubarb

¾ cup miniature chocolate chips

1 cup dried fruit, such as raisins, currants, cranberries, or chopped apricots

2 tsp. crushed dried lavender

¾ cup toasted pecan or walnut pieces or sliced almonds

Quick breads are THE perfect gift in so many ways. First, they're oh-so-easy to make (quick is in their name, after all). Second, recipients can enjoy now or freeze for later. Lastly, once eaten, they're gone—no storage space needed.

give the gift of BREAD

Tie a ribbon around a muffin pan for a simple yet elegant holiday gift.

Berry Bran Cereal Muffins

HANDS ON 15 minutes
BAKE 20 minutes at 400°F
COOL 5 minutes

- Nonstick cooking spray
- 3 cups whole bran cereal (not flakes), such as All Bran
- 1 cup boiling water
- 2½ cups all-purpose flour
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- ½ cup packed brown sugar
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- ½ tsp. salt
- ½ tsp. ground cinnamon (optional)
- 2 cups buttermilk
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- ½ cup vegetable oil
- 1½ cups fresh or frozen strawberries, hulled and sliced or chopped
- Cinnamon-Sugar

1. Preheat oven to 400°F. Line twenty-four 2½-inch muffin cups with paper bake cups; coat papers with nonstick cooking spray. In a medium bowl stir together cereal and boiling water until moistened.
2. In another medium bowl stir together the next seven ingredients (through cinnamon, if using). In a large bowl combine buttermilk, eggs, and oil. Stir cereal and flour mixture into buttermilk mixture just until moistened. Fold in berries.
3. Spoon batter into prepared muffin cups, filling each about three-fourths full. Sprinkle with Cinnamon-Sugar.
4. Bake until a toothpick comes out clean, about 20 minutes. Cool in muffin cups on a wire rack 5 minutes. Remove from muffin cups; serve warm. **Makes 24 muffins.**

CINNAMON-SUGAR In a small bowl combine ¼ cup granulated sugar and ½ tsp. ground cinnamon.

PER MUFFIN *167 cal, 6 g fat (1 g sat fat), 16 mg chol, 179 mg sodium, 28 g carb, 3 g fiber, 14 g sugars, 4 g pro.*

Easy Biscuit Cinnamon Rolls

HANDS ON 20 minutes **BAKE** 20 minutes at 400°F **COOL** 15 minutes

- ¼ cup salted butter, melted, divided
- ¼ cup plus 3 Tbsp. granulated sugar, divided
- ¼ cup packed brown sugar
- 2 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- ½ tsp. salt
- 5 Tbsp. cold salted butter, cut up
- ¾ cup buttermilk
- ½ tsp. vanilla
- 2 Tbsp. finely chopped toasted walnuts
- 1 recipe Caramel Icing

1. Preheat oven to 400°F. Brush 2 Tbsp. of the melted butter in the bottom of an 8-inch round baking pan. For filling, in a small bowl combine ¼ cup granulated sugar, the brown sugar, and cinnamon. Sprinkle 3 Tbsp. of the mixture in the bottom of prepared baking pan.

2. In a large bowl stir together flour, remaining 3 Tbsp. granulated sugar, the baking powder, and salt. Using a pastry blender, cut in the 5 Tbsp. butter pieces until the size of small peas. Make a well in the center of the flour mixture. Add buttermilk and vanilla all at once. Using a fork, stir just until mixture is moistened. Gently work with your hands to bring dough together. Turn dough out onto a well-floured surface. Roll dough to a 10×10-inch square.

3. Brush dough with remaining 2 Tbsp. melted butter. Sprinkle with remaining cinnamon-sugar mixture. Sprinkle with walnuts. Using a bench scraper to guide the dough, gently roll up dough into a tight log. Cut crosswise in 8 slices. Arrange in prepared pan. Bake until lightly browned, 20 to 25 minutes.

4. Spread Caramel Icing over warm rolls. **Makes 8 rolls.**

CARAMEL ICING In a saucepan melt ¼ cup salted butter over medium. Stir in ½ cup packed brown sugar; bring to boiling over medium-high. Reduce heat to medium. Cook and stir 2 minutes. Turn off heat. Add 3 Tbsp. milk and 1 Tbsp. pure maple syrup (it will bubble); whisk briskly until smooth. Remove from heat. Let cool 15 minutes. Whisk in 1 cup powdered sugar.

PER ROLL *493 cal, 21 g fat (12 g sat fat), 51 mg chol, 468 mg sodium, 74 g carb, 1 g fiber, 49 g sugars, 5 g pro.*

Parchment baking pans make a great vehicle for gifting baked goods. Just bake the rolls in the pan, and add a ribbon and tag.

Pair this savory cheese-, salami-, and olive-filled loaf with a bottle of wine. Wrap the loaf in parchment paper and ribbons. Make a festive holiday label for the wine. Tie the two together with twine.

Charcuterie Loaf

HANDS ON 20 minutes
BAKE 45 minutes at 350°F
COOL 10 minutes

- **1½ cups all purpose flour**
- **2 tsp. baking powder**
- **½ tsp. salt**
- **½ tsp. freshly ground black pepper**
- **4 eggs, lightly beaten**
- **½ cup sour cream**
- **½ cup extra virgin olive oil**
- **1 Tbsp. chopped fresh rosemary and/or thyme**
- **1 cup shredded smoked cheddar, sharp cheddar, and/or Gouda cheese (4 oz.)**
- **¾ cup diced salami (3.5 oz.)**
- **¾ cup pitted whole green or Castelvetrano olives**
- **2 Tbsp. grated or shredded Parmesan cheese**

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease a 9×5-inch loaf pan.
2. In a large bowl stir together flour, baking powder, salt, and pepper. Make a well in center of flour mixture.
3. In a medium bowl combine eggs, sour cream, olive oil, and fresh herbs. Add egg mixture all at once to the flour mixture. Stir just until moistened (batter should be lumpy).
4. Fold cheddar cheese, salami, and olives into the batter. Spoon batter into prepared loaf pan. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese.
5. Bake until golden brown and a toothpick comes out clean, 45 minutes. (If necessary to prevent overbrowning, cover loosely with foil the last 15 minutes of baking.) Cool in pan on a wire rack 10 minutes. Remove from pan; cool completely on wire rack.
Makes 12 servings (1 slice each).
PER SERVING *266 cal, 20 g fat (6 g sat fat), 87 mg chol, 493 mg sodium, 14 g carb, 0 g fiber, 0 g sugars, 8 g pro.*

Gift biscuits in a cloth-lined bowl or basket accompanied by a jar of Honey Butter or coarse-ground mustard. Add a bundle of sage tied around a small wooden spoon for spreading.

Pumpkin-Sage White Cheddar Biscuits

HANDS ON 15 minutes **BAKE** 13 minutes at 450°F

- **3 cups all-purpose flour**
- **1 Tbsp. packed brown sugar**
- **1 Tbsp. baking powder**
- **1 tsp. salt**
- **½ cup cold butter, cut up or shredded**
- **¼ cup shortening**
- **½ cup shredded white cheddar cheese (2 oz.)**
- **1 Tbsp. finely chopped fresh sage**
- **1 cup canned pumpkin**
- **¼ cup milk**
- **Salted butter, melted**
- **Honey Butter or coarse-ground mustard**

1. Preheat oven to 450°F. In a large bowl stir together flour, brown sugar, baking powder, and salt. Using a pastry blender, cut in ½ cup butter and the shortening until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Stir in cheese and sage. Make a well in the center of the flour mixture. Add pumpkin and milk; stir with a fork just until moistened.

2. Turn dough out onto a lightly floured surface. Knead dough by folding and gently pressing it just until dough holds together. Pat or lightly roll dough until ¾ inch thick. Cut with a floured 2½-inch round cutter; reroll scraps as necessary and dip cutter into flour between cuts.

3. Place dough cutouts 1 inch apart on an ungreased baking sheet. Bake until golden, 13 to 15 minutes. Brush tops with melted butter and, if you like, sprinkle with additional chopped sage. Remove from baking sheet; serve warm with Honey Butter. **Makes 12 biscuits.**

HONEY BUTTER In a small bowl stir together ¼ cup salted butter, softened, and 2 Tbsp. honey until combined.

PER BISCUIT *277 cal, 17 g fat (9 g sat fat), 33 mg chol, 433 mg sodium, 28 g carb, 1 g fiber, 2 g sugars, 5 g pro.*

Cut a decorative wine bag in half and tuck the bread loaf into the bag. Transfer the icing and crystallized ginger to resealable sandwich bags and tie onto the bag with twine.

Gingerbread Loaf with Lemon Icing

HANDS ON 20 minutes
BAKE 45 minutes at 350°F
COOL 10 minutes

- **2 cups all-purpose flour**
- **1½ tsp. baking powder**
- **1½ tsp. ground cinnamon**
- **¾ tsp. ground ginger**
- **¾ tsp. salt**
- **½ tsp. baking soda**
- **¾ cup milk**
- **⅔ cup vegetable oil**
- **½ cup sugar**
- **2 eggs, lightly beaten**
- **⅓ cup mild-flavor molasses**
- **2 Tbsp. finely chopped crystallized ginger**
- **1 recipe Lemon Icing**
- **¼ cup coarsely chopped crystallized ginger**

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease a 9×5-inch loaf pan.
2. In a large bowl stir together the first six ingredients (through baking soda). Make a well in center of flour mixture. In a medium bowl combine the next five ingredients (through molasses). Add milk mixture all at once to the flour mixture. Stir just until moistened (batter should be lumpy). Fold in the 2 Tbsp. finely chopped crystallized ginger. Spoon batter into prepared pan.
3. Bake until a toothpick comes out clean, 45 to 55 minutes. Cool in pan on wire rack 10 minutes. Remove from pan; cool completely on wire rack.
4. Before serving, drizzle top of loaf with Lemon Icing. Sprinkle with coarsely chopped crystallized ginger. **Makes 16 servings** (1 slice each).
LEMON ICING In a small bowl stir together 1 cup powdered sugar and 1 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice until combined. Add more lemon juice, ½ tsp. at a time, as needed to reach desired consistency.
PER SERVING *237 cal, 10 g fat (2 g sat fat), 24 mg chol, 214 mg sodium, 34 g carb, 1 g fiber, 21 g sugars, 3 g pro.*

Almond Alchemy

Come December, peppermint and nutmeg get all the love, but the warmth and sweetness of almonds are essential to so much holiday baking. These recipes celebrate the magic of their incomparable flavor and fragrance.

Form these delicate spirals by twisting strips of dough then wrapping the twists around your fingers.

Swedish Saffron-Almond Buns, *p. 22*

Tender, golden saffron buns are a classic teatime snack in the long twilight hours of winter in Sweden. Called lussekatter, the buns are typically an S shape, but this version, with saffron dough twisted around a sweet almond filling, is particularly delightful.

Text by Emily Teel

Swedish Saffron-Almond Buns

PICTURED ON *P. 21* // **HANDS ON** 30 minutes **RISE** 2 hours
BAKE 15 minutes at 375°F

- **1 cup milk**
- **¼ cup unsalted butter, cut into pieces**
- **Pinch saffron threads**
- **3¼ cups all-purpose flour**
- **¼ cup sugar**
- **2¼ tsp. instant yeast**
- **¾ tsp. salt**
- **½ cup unsalted butter, softened**
- **½ recipe (⅔ to ¾ cup) Almond Paste *(p. 29)* or one 7- to 8-oz. pkg. almond paste, at room temperature**
- **1 tsp. orange zest**
- **1 egg**
- **Sliced almonds**
- **Toasted Almond Syrup *(right)* or simple syrup (optional)**

1. In a small saucepan combine milk, ¼ cup butter pieces, and the saffron. Heat over medium-low, stirring frequently, until butter begins to melt and mixture is warm (110°F to 115°F). Remove from heat; stir until butter is melted.
2. In the bowl of a stand mixer (tip, *below*) fitted with a dough hook attachment stir together flour, sugar, yeast, and salt. Add milk mixture; mix on low until a soft dough forms. Continue mixing until smooth and elastic, 5 minutes.
3. Form dough into a ball; place in a greased bowl. Cover and let rise in a warm place until double in size, about 1 hour.
4. Meanwhile, for filling, in a medium bowl combine ½ cup softened butter, Almond Paste, and orange zest. Beat with a mixer until smooth.
5. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper. On a large, lightly floured surface roll out dough to a 22x15-inch rectangle. Spread a thin layer of filling evenly across entire surface of dough. Fold short sides of dough toward the center (like a letter). With long side of dough near you, dust top lightly with additional flour, gently pressing to seal seams.
6. Using a pastry or pizza cutter, cut off any uneven (not folded) edges and discard trimmings. Cut dough evenly crosswise into 12 strips. Pick up a strip, holding one end in each hand. Stretch it gently and twist it five or six times. Pinch one end of the strip and wrap into a spiral, tucking the loose ends underneath. Place on prepared baking sheet. Repeat with remaining strips. Loosely cover buns; let rise until puffy, 60 to 90 minutes.
7. Preheat oven to 375°F. In a small bowl whisk together egg and 1 Tbsp. *water*. Brush each bun with egg wash; sprinkle with sliced almonds.
8. Bake until golden, 15 to 18 minutes. Transfer to a wire rack. If you like, brush warm buns with Toasted Almond Syrup or simple syrup. **Makes 12 buns.**
PER BUN *324 cal, 17 g fat (8 g sat fat), 48 mg chol, 165 mg sodium, 38 g carb, 2 g fiber, 10 g sugars, 6 g pro.*

NO STAND MIXER?

If you do not have a stand mixer, combine ingredients as directed in Step 2, except add only 2 cups flour. Use a hand mixer on low to beat the mixture for 30 seconds, scraping bowl constantly. Beat on medium-high 3 minutes. Stir in 1 cup of the remaining flour by hand. Use some of the remaining flour to dust a work surface. Turn dough out onto the work surface. Knead in the remaining flour to make a soft, slightly sticky dough that is elastic (3 to 5 minutes). Continue as directed in Step 3.

Holiday Cookie Lattes

START TO FINISH 10 minutes

- **2 cups milk**
- **½ cup white baking chips**
- **1 tsp. vanilla**
- **½ tsp. butter extract**
- **⅔ cup Toasted Almond Syrup *(below)***
- **4 cups hot brewed medium-roast coffee**
- **Sweetened Whipped Cream *(opposite)***
- **Shortbread cookies (optional)**

1. In a small saucepan heat milk over medium-low until steaming. Remove from heat; add baking chips, vanilla, and butter extract. Whisk until chips are melted. Add Toasted Almond Syrup; heat over medium-low until steaming. Froth milk with a whisk, immersion blender, or milk frother.
2. Divide coffee and frothed milk mixture evenly among eight warm mugs. Top each with Sweetened Whipped Cream and serve with shortbread cookies, if using. **Makes 8 lattes** (6 oz. each).
PER LATTE *168 cal, 7 g fat (4 g sat fat), 11 mg chol, 42 mg sodium, 24 g carb, 0 g fiber, 24 g sugars, 3 g pro.*

Toasted Almond Syrup

HANDS ON 20 minutes
ROAST 4 minutes at 400°F **COOL** 2 hours

- **1½ cups whole almonds**
- **1½ cups water**
- **1¼ cups sugar**

1. Preheat oven to 400°F. Spread almonds in a single layer on a baking sheet. Roast until aromatic, 4 to 5 minutes; remove from oven. Transfer almonds to a kitchen towel on counter; cool completely.
2. Place almonds in a food processor. Pulse until they resemble a coarse crumble (stop before reaching fine powder).
3. In a saucepan bring the water to boiling; add sugar, stirring until completely dissolved. Boil, uncovered, 3 minutes. Add almonds; stir to combine. Return mixture to boiling; remove from heat. Cover; let stand until completely cooled, at least 2 hours.
4. Strain syrup through a fine-mesh sieve. If necessary, strain again through cheesecloth or a paper coffee filter to remove remaining almond particles (syrup will look cloudy). Transfer to a clean bottle or jar. Store in refrigerator up to 2 weeks. Shake before using. **Makes 1½ cups.**
PER TBSP. *46 cal, 1 g fat (0 g sat fat), 0 mg chol., 0 mg sodium, 22 g carb, 1 g fiber, 11 g sugars, 0 g pro.*

Holiday Cookie Latte

Think of this as a copycat version of the seasonal latte at your favorite coffee shop—but you don't need an espresso maker to pull it off. Instead we combine brewed coffee, a homemade toasted almond syrup, and white chocolate-infused milk. A dash of vanilla and whipped cream top it off.

Sweetened Whipped Cream

In a large bowl combine 1 cup heavy cream, 2 Tbsp. sugar, and ½ tsp. vanilla. Beat with a mixer on medium until soft peaks form (tips curl). If you prefer, continue beating until stiff peaks form (tips stand straight). Do not overbeat or the cream will turn to butter.

ROASTING ALMONDS

The step of roasting the almonds ahead of time adds big flavor to our almond syrup, but it's important to let the almonds cool before grinding them or they could turn into almond butter.

Chocolate-Almond Croissant Bread Pudding

If you're looking for a stunner of a Christmas morning breakfast, consider this dish a contender. We tore plain grocery store croissants into pieces and covered them in almond-scented custard and melting chocolate. A chewy crowning layer of frangipane (almond pastry filling) contrasts with the silky casserole.

Chocolate-Almond Croissant Bread Pudding

HANDS ON 30 minutes
BAKE 40 minutes at 350°F

- ¾ cup almond flour
- ⅓ cup granulated sugar
- ⅓ cup salted butter, melted
- 2 Tbsp. all-purpose flour
- 7 eggs, divided
- 3 cups half-and-half
- ½ cup packed brown sugar
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- ½ tsp. almond extract
- ¼ tsp. salt
- Nonstick cooking spray
- 6 croissants, torn into bite-size pieces (about 8 cups)
- 1 cup semisweet chocolate chunks
- Powdered sugar

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Stir together almond flour, granulated sugar, butter, all-purpose flour, and one of the eggs.
2. For custard, beat together remaining six eggs. Stir in half-and-half, brown sugar, vanilla, almond extract, and salt.
3. Coat a 2- to 3-qt. baking dish with nonstick cooking spray. Add croissant pieces to dish. Pour custard over top, jiggling baking dish gently to distribute custard. Sprinkle with chocolate chunks. Evenly spoon mounds of almond flour mixture over top. Bake until golden and custard is set, about 40 minutes (for 3-qt. dish) or 50 minutes (for 2-qt. dish) (internal temperature should register 160°F). Dust with powdered sugar before serving.
Makes 12 servings (⅔ cup each).
PER SERVING *480 cal, 30 g fat (15 g sat fat), 168 mg chol, 314 mg sodium, 44 g carb, 3 g fiber, 27 g sugars, 11 g pro.*

Linzer Torte

PICTURED ON *P. 26* // **HANDS ON** 30 minutes **FREEZE** 1 hour 15 minutes
BAKE 40 minutes at 350°F

- 1¾ cups all-purpose flour
- 1¾ cups almond flour
- ⅓ cup granulated sugar
- ⅓ cup packed brown sugar
- ½ tsp. ground cinnamon
- ¼ tsp. salt
- 1 cup cold salted butter, cubed
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- ½ tsp. lemon zest
- 3 Tbsp. all-purpose flour
- 1 cup apricot jam or seedless raspberry jam
- Powdered sugar (optional)

1. In a bowl (tip, *below*) combine the first six ingredients (through salt). Add butter. Using a pastry blender, cut butter into flour mixture until crumbly. Add eggs and lemon zest; stir until mixture forms a soft dough. Press two-thirds of dough into a flat disk about 7 inches in diameter. Wrap; chill at least 1 hour.
2. Meanwhile, for top crust, add 3 Tbsp. all-purpose flour to remaining dough; knead to combine. Roll (tip, *right*) into an 11-inch round between two sheets of parchment paper. Freeze 1 hour.
3. Remove the larger portion of dough; press into the bottom and up sides of an ungreased fluted 11-inch tart pan with a removable bottom. Refrigerate while top crust freezes.
4. Preheat oven to 350°F. Remove the rolled-out crust from the freezer. Remove top sheet of parchment. Use cookie cutters to cut a design in the dough, transferring the cutouts to a parchment paper-lined baking sheet. Return sheet with cut dough to freezer for 15 minutes. Meanwhile, spread jam in an even layer over dough in pan. Invert the cut sheet of dough on top and press edges together gently to seal.
5. Bake tart until jam is bubbly and top is golden, about 40 minutes. Bake cutouts until golden, 8 to 10 minutes. Cool completely.
6. Dust with powdered sugar before serving, if you like.
Makes 8 servings.
PER SERVING *654 cal, 37 g fat (16 g sat fat), 108 mg chol, 289 mg sodium, 74 g carb, 4 g fiber, 38 g sugars, 10 g pro.*

CRUST CUTOUTS

On parchment paper, trace around the edge of your tart pan with a pencil to create a round template. Set dough on a second unmarked piece of parchment. Place parchment with pencil mark facing up on top of dough so pencil mark doesn't touch dough. Roll out dough to edges of circle on template.

MAKE IT QUICK

To use a food processor, add all-purpose and almond flours, granulated and brown sugars, cinnamon, salt, and butter to the bowl of a food processor; pulse until mixture is crumbly. Add eggs and zest; process until dough just comes together. Divide as in Step 1 and continue as directed.

Freezing the rolled-out dough for the top crust helps give the cutouts crisp edges.

Linzer Torte

Perhaps you know jam-filled Linzer cookies, but have you met the mega version? Linzer torte is an Austrian tart with hazelnuts or almonds in the pastry and a jam filling. Our version *(p. 25)*, baked in a shallow tart pan, yields tender slices perfect with a warm drink on a cold day. For the top, we created a cutout option you can customize for any occasion to swap for the traditional lattice.

Almond Crinkle Cookies

Chocolate crinkle cookies, named for the crackly pattern they get from being rolled in powdered sugar before baking, are a holiday favorite. We updated our recipe *(p. 31)* to showcase almond's distinctive flavor instead. The edges have the toasty snap of an amaretti biscuit, but the centers remain pleasantly chewy with the addition of almond flour.

Swap the cherry preserves for any other berry or stone fruit jam, or create stripes of different jams on top of the crust before adding the crumble.

Cherry-Almond Crumble Bars

Sweet cherry preserves and the floral fragrance of almonds pair beautifully in our marzipan-topped cookie bars. Almonds flavor the buttery shortbread base, crumble, and glaze. The generous yield makes the bars a great choice for a cookie swap.

Cherry-Almond Crumble Bars

HANDS ON 20 minutes **BAKE** 50 minutes at 325°F **COOL** 1 hour

- **1¼ cups salted butter, softened**
- **1⅔ cups powdered sugar, divided**
- **⅔ cup granulated sugar**
- **1 tsp. vanilla**
- **2 tsp. almond extract, divided**
- **2⅔ cups all-purpose flour**
- **1½ cups cherry preserves**
- **⅔ to ¾ cup Almond Paste (about ½ recipe) *(right)* or one 7- to 8-oz. pkg. almond paste**
- **½ cup chopped almonds**

1. Preheat oven to 325°F. Line a 15×10-inch baking pan with parchment paper, extending paper over edges. Grease parchment.

2. In a large bowl beat butter with a mixer on medium to high 30 seconds. Add 1 cup of the powdered sugar and the granulated sugar. Beat on medium 2 minutes, scraping bowl as needed. Beat in vanilla and 1 tsp. of the almond extract until combined. Beat in flour until a soft dough forms. Press the dough into the bottom of the prepared pan. Bake until crust is set, 15 to 20 minutes.

3. Carefully spread preserves evenly over crust. Break up almond paste into crumbles and scatter over top of preserves. Sprinkle with almonds.

4. Bake until almonds are toasted and almond paste is golden, 35 to 40 minutes more. Cool on a wire rack at least 1 hour.

5. For glaze, whisk together remaining ⅔ cup powdered sugar, remaining 1 tsp. almond extract, and 1 Tbsp. *water.* Drizzle bars with glaze. Use parchment to lift uncut bars out of pan. Cut into bars. Makes 24 bars.

PER BAR *299 cal, 13 g fat (6 g sat fat), 25 mg chol, 84 mg sodium, 43 g carb, 1 g fiber, 27 g sugars, 3 g pro.*

Holiday recipes frequently call for premade almond paste, but the little tubes of it can be pricey. Make your own for a fraction of the cost and in just a few minutes using a food processor.

Almond Paste

START TO FINISH 10 minutes

- **1¾ cups blanched almond flour**
- **1½ cups powdered sugar**
- **1 egg white**
- **1 tsp. almond extract (optional)**

1. In a food processor combine almond flour, powdered sugar, and a pinch of *salt.* Process until well combined and fluffy. Add egg white and almond extract (if using); process until mixture is a soft, smooth dough. If mixture is very sticky, add an additional spoonful of powdered sugar.

2. Seal in an airtight container (paste will harden if not sealed well) and store in refrigerator up to 2 weeks. Makes about 1½ cups.

TIP Use this paste in baked goods. If you want to use it in unbaked recipes, substitute a pasteurized egg white for food safety.

PER 2 TBSP. *153 cal, 7 g fat (0 sat fat), 0 mg chol, 5 mg sodium, 18 g carb, 2 g fiber, 16 g sugars, 5 g pro.*

Almond Pastry Bites

These two-bite treats are packed with all the flavor of an almond croissant from a bakery. A sheet of store-bought puff pastry supplies the flaky layers, and a filling of almond flour, brown sugar, egg, and butter caramelizes in the oven.

Almond Flour

There are two types of almond flour. "Natural" almond flour is made from raw nuts, including the skins (aka almond meal). In blanched almond flour, the skins are removed first so, absent the light brown flecks, the color is lighter. Aside from looks, we found they can be used interchangeably.

Almond Pastry Bites

HANDS ON 35 minutes **BAKE** 10 minutes at 400°F

- **1 cup almond flour**
- **½ cup packed brown sugar**
- **½ cup salted butter, softened**
- **1 egg**
- **½ tsp. almond extract**
- **½ tsp. vanilla**
- **½ of a 17.3-oz. pkg. frozen puff pastry sheets (1 sheet), thawed**
- **Whole almonds**
- **Powdered sugar**

1. Preheat oven to 400°F. Spread almond flour in a shallow baking pan; bake until flour smells toasted and just begins to turn golden brown; cool slightly, 3 to 4 minutes.
2. For filling, in a medium bowl combine toasted almond flour, brown sugar, butter, egg, almond extract, vanilla, and ¼ tsp. *salt*. Beat with mixer on medium until smooth.
3. On a lightly floured surface roll out pastry to a 15×10-inch rectangle. Cut into twenty-four 2½-inch squares. Gently press squares into 1¾-inch muffin cups.
4. Fill each pastry-lined cup with 1 Tbsp. filling. Top each with an almond. Bake until filling is puffed and pastry is golden brown, 10 to 15 minutes. Dust with powdered sugar. **Makes 24 bites.**

PER BITE *130 cal, 9 g fat (4 g sat fat), 18 mg chol, 94 mg sodium, 10 g carb, 1 g fiber, 5 g sugars, 3 g pro.*

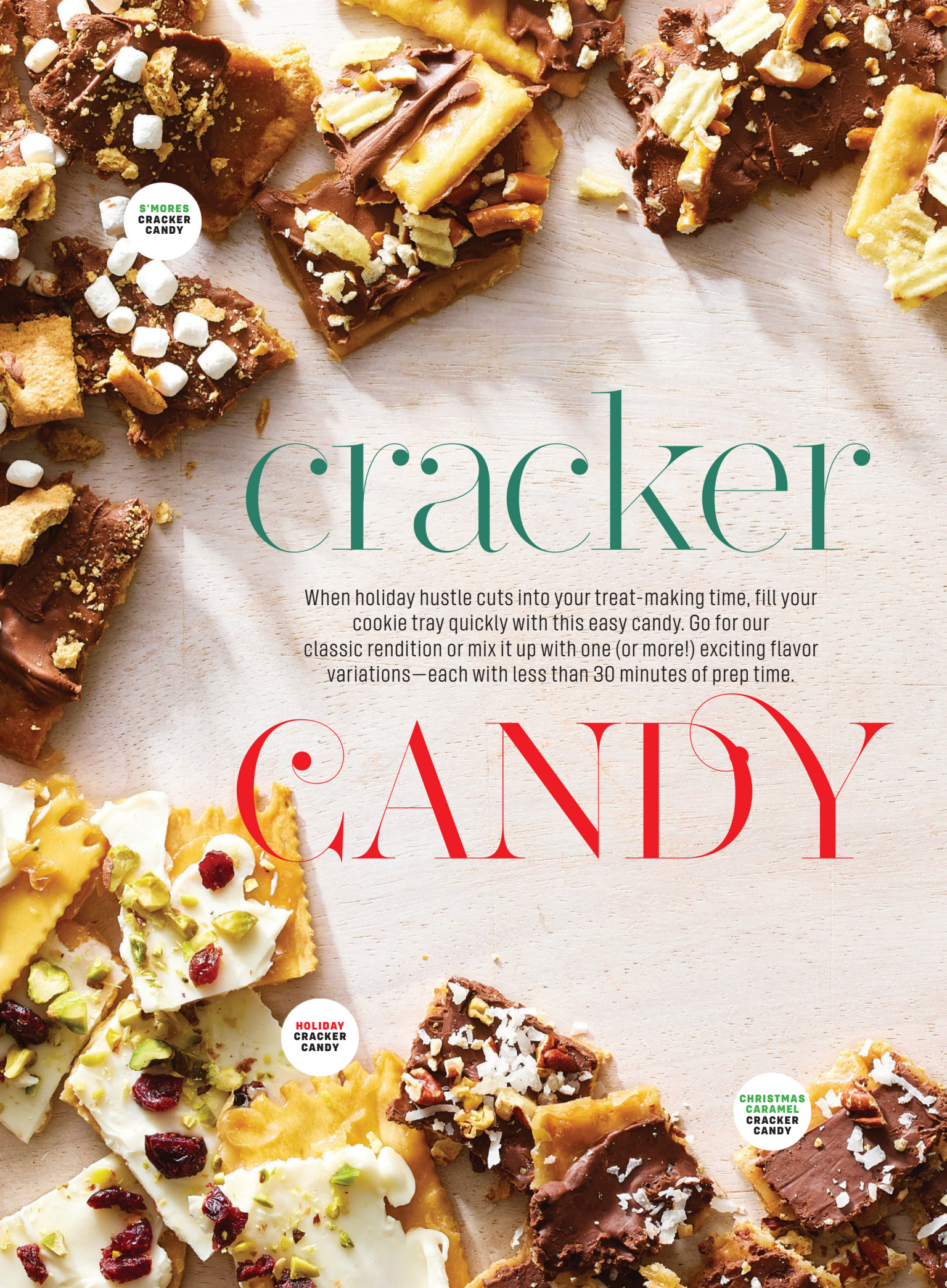
Almond Crinkle Cookies

PICTURED ON *P. 27* // **HANDS ON** 25 minutes **CHILL** 30 minutes **BAKE** 13 minutes at 350°F

- **½ cup salted butter, softened**
- **1¼ cups granulated sugar**
- **2 eggs**
- **1 tsp. vanilla**
- **½ tsp. almond extract**
- **1½ cups all-purpose flour**
- **1 cup almond flour**
- **1 tsp. baking powder**
- **½ tsp. salt**
- **1 cup powdered sugar**

1. In a large bowl beat butter and granulated sugar with a mixer on medium until fluffy. Add eggs, vanilla, and almond extract; beat until smooth.
2. In a medium bowl whisk together both flours, baking powder, and salt.
3. Gradually add flour mixture to butter mixture, beating on low until combined. Cover and chill dough until easy to handle, 30 to 60 minutes.
4. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line two cookie sheets with parchment paper. Place the powdered sugar in a shallow bowl.
5. Shape dough into 1-inch balls; roll each in powdered sugar until completely coated. Once all balls are coated, roll each in powdered sugar again to coat well. Arrange dough balls 2 inches apart on prepared cookie sheets.
6. Bake until cookies flatten out and have a matte, crackly surface and edges are just golden, 13 to 15 minutes.
7. Cool 2 minutes on cookie sheets. Remove; cool completely on wire racks. **Makes 24 cookies.**

PER COOKIE *156 cal, 6 g fat (3 g sat fat), 26 mg chol, 100 mg sodium, 23 g carb, 1 g fiber, 16 g sugars, 3 g pro.*



cracker CANDY

When holiday hustle cuts into your treat-making time, fill your cookie tray quickly with this easy candy. Go for our classic rendition or mix it up with one (or more!) exciting flavor variations—each with less than 30 minutes of prep time.

Christmas Caramel Cracker Candy

HANDS ON 15 minutes **COOK** 2 minutes **BAKE** 8 minutes at 350°F **COOL** 30 minutes **CHILL** 1 hour

- **11 to 12 graham cracker rectangles**
- **½ cup salted butter**
- **⅓ cup packed brown sugar**
- **¼ tsp. salt**
- **1 tsp. vanilla**
- **2 cups semisweet chocolate or peanut butter-flavor chips**
- **½ to ¾ cup chopped toasted pecans, peanuts, almonds, cashews, macadamia nuts, and/or walnuts**
- **¼ cup sweetened coconut flakes, toasted**

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line a 15×10-inch baking pan with foil, extending foil over edges. Coat foil with *nonstick cooking spray.* Cover bottom of prepared pan with crackers, breaking to fit or overlapping as needed.

2. In a medium saucepan bring butter, brown sugar, and salt to boiling, stirring to melt butter. Boil gently, without stirring, 2 minutes. Remove from heat. Stir in vanilla.

3. Evenly drizzle mixture over crackers. Bake until bubbly, 8 to 10 minutes. (The caramel mixture will fill out the spaces between the crackers during baking.) Place hot pan on a wire rack. Sprinkle with chips; let stand 5 minutes to soften.

4. Spread chips over crackers and sprinkle with nuts and coconut. Cool 30 minutes. Chill until chocolate is set, about 1 hour. Using foil, lift out uncut candy. Break into irregular pieces. Store at room temperature up to 3 days. **Makes 24 pieces** (2½×1½ inches each).

PER PIECE *166 cal, 11 g fat (5 g sat fat), 10 mg chol, 94 mg sodium, 18 g carb, 1 g fiber, 13 g sugars, 1 g pro.*

DARK CHOCOLATE CRACKER CANDY Prepare as directed, except substitute 40 saltine crackers for the graham crackers and dark chocolate chips for the semisweet chips; omit nuts and coconut. Sprinkle with ⅓ cup toasted pepitas and ¼ cup each chopped dried apricots and almond toffee bits.

HOLIDAY CRACKER CANDY Prepare as directed, except substitute 6 to 7 flatbread crackers with sea salt for the graham crackers and white baking chips for the semisweet chips; omit nuts and coconut. Sprinkle with ⅓ cup each salted pistachio nuts and chopped dried cranberries.

POTATO CHIP-PRETZEL CRACKER CANDY Prepare as directed, except substitute 39 to 40 rich rectangular crackers for the graham crackers and milk chocolate chips for the semisweet chips; omit nuts and coconut. Sprinkle with ⅓ cup each crushed potato chips and pretzels.

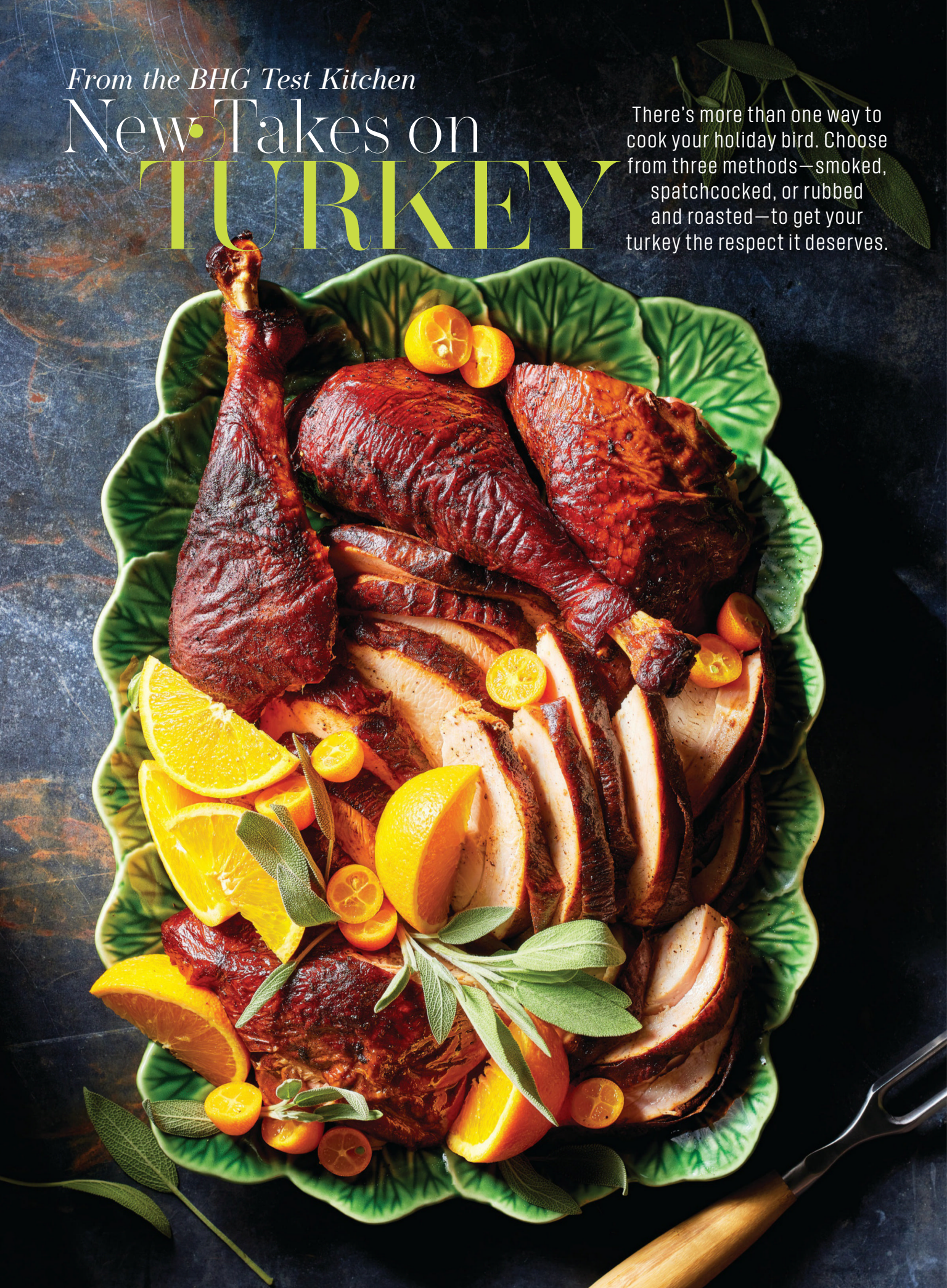
CHOCOLATE COOKIE-PEPPERMINT CRACKER CANDY Prepare as directed, except substitute chocolate graham crackers for the plain graham crackers and white baking chips for the semisweet chips; omit nuts and coconut. Sprinkle with ½ cup broken chocolate sandwich cookies with mint or white filling and ¼ cup crushed peppermint candies.

S'MORES CRACKER CANDY Prepare as directed, except substitute milk chocolate chips for the semisweet chips; omit nuts and coconut. Sprinkle with ½ cup tiny dried marshmallow bits and ⅓ cup crushed graham crackers.

From the BHG Test Kitchen

New Takes on TURKEY

There's more than one way to cook your holiday bird. Choose from three methods—smoked, spatchcocked, or rubbed and roasted—to get your turkey the respect it deserves.



When selecting turkeys for smoking, smaller is better. We don't recommend smoking turkeys larger than 14 pounds, as they take too long to come up to a food-safe temperature.

Smoked Mole-Inspired Turkey

HANDS ON 45 minutes **SOAK** 1 hour **SMOKE** 4 hours **STAND** 15 minutes

- **6 to 8 pecan or maple wood chunks**
- **1 Tbsp. chili powder**
- **2 tsp. sweet paprika**
- **2 tsp. ground cumin**
- **1½ tsp. packed brown sugar**
- **1 tsp. unsweetened cocoa powder**
- **½ tsp. ground cinnamon**
- **1 tsp. kosher salt**
- **1 12- to 14-lb. turkey (tip, *above*)**
- **½ orange, cut into wedges**
- **½ white onion, cut into wedges**
- **4 sprigs fresh oregano**
- **Oranges, kumquats, and/or fresh sage**

1. Soak wood chunks in enough water to cover at least 1 hour. Drain when ready to use.

2. For the mole rub, in a small bowl stir together chili powder, paprika, cumin, brown sugar, cocoa powder, cinnamon, and salt.

3. Remove neck and giblets from turkey; reserve for another use or discard. Pat turkey skin dry with paper towels. Loosen the skin over the breast and thighs using your hands, reaching between the skin and meat.

4. Sprinkle mole rub lightly under the skin and generously in the cavity and over the skin. Place orange and onion wedges and oregano sprigs in the cavity. Tie drumsticks securely to the tail using 100-percent-cotton kitchen string. Tuck wing tips under back of turkey.

5. In a smoker, arrange preheated coals, drained wood chunks, and water pan according to the manufacturer's directions. Pour water into water pan. Bring smoker temperature to between 225°F and 250°F. (You will need to maintain this temperature throughout smoking.) Place turkey on grill rack over water pan. Close smoker; smoke until temperature in the thickest part of the thigh registers 175°F, 4 to 5 hours. Tent turkey with foil after the first 2 to 3 hours if the turkey is getting too dark. Add additional coals and water to the smoker as needed to maintain temperature and moisture. Remove turkey from smoker. Tent with foil; let stand 15 minutes before carving. If you like, garnish with oranges. **Makes 10 servings** (4 oz. each + leftovers).

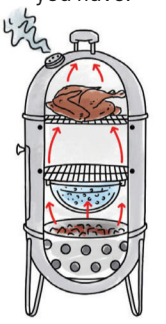
PER SERVING *156 cal, 5 g fat (1 g sat fat), 92 mg chol, 114 mg sodium, 1 g carb, 0 g fiber, 1 g sugars, 6 g pro.*

Smoker Temp

Check smoker temperature at least hourly. Slightly close (not all the way) top vent if temperature exceeds 250°F; open top vent all the way if temperature drops below 225°F. Add cold coals to the bottom basket, four to six at a time as needed to keep smoker temperature between 225°F and 250°F.

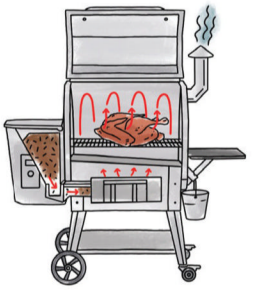
Fire It Up
Smoker Insight

The time it takes to get a smokin'-hot bird depends on the type of smoker you have.



Bullet Smoker

Keep the temp between 225°F and 250°F, and plan about 30 minutes per pound of turkey. We recommend going with a smaller bird (10 to 12 pounds) for this smoker to reduce watch time and the need to add coals and water.



Pellet Smoker

You can accomplish amazing smoked flavor in less time using a pellet grill. With the smoker set at 325°F, plan on approximately 15 minutes per pound of turkey.

smoked
Mole-Inspired Turkey

If you have a smoker or a grill and a little extra cooking time, this method turns out an exceptionally tasty bird. "Smoking is superior for turkey because it cooks the thighs first and leaves the breast super juicy and tender, not to mention the smoky flavor that saturates the meat," says Emily Nienhaus, BHG Test Kitchen culinary specialist.

Text by Kaitlyn Moncada

For spatchcocking, a smaller turkey will fit better in the pan.

spatchcock Mediterranean Turkey

Our spatchcocked (aka butterflied) turkey method not only provides a different take on presentation, but also is the route to go if you have a tighter cooking window. "Spatchcocking the turkey may seem like a lot of work up front, but it shortens the roasting time and makes carving a breeze," says Juliana Hale, BHG Test Kitchen senior culinary specialist.

"It's always good to let your roast turkey stand for 15 to 20 minutes before carving. This allows the flesh to firm, so it's easier to slice and gives the juices time to redistribute. Cover with foil to keep it warm while it rests."

—LYNN BLANCHARD, *Test Kitchen director*

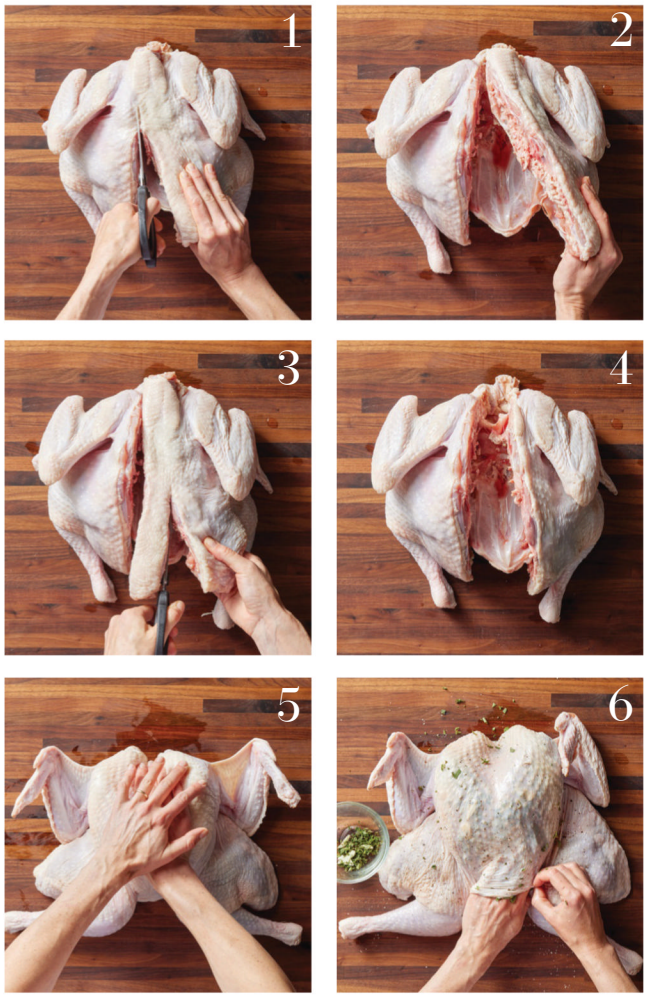
Spatchcock Mediterranean Turkey

HANDS ON 30 minutes **ROAST** 1 hour 10 minutes at 450°F
STAND 15 minutes

- **1 12- to 13-lb. turkey**
- **1 Tbsp. kosher salt**
- **1 tsp. black pepper**
- **2 Tbsp. fresh oregano leaves**
- **1 Tbsp. coarsely chopped fresh sage**
- **2 tsp. fresh thyme leaves**
- **6 cloves garlic, sliced**
- **1 lemon, sliced, divided**
- **Whole garlic bulbs**

1. Preheat oven to 450°F. Place a roasting rack in a large shallow roasting pan.
2. Remove neck and giblets from turkey; reserve for another use or discard. To spatchcock the turkey, place it breast side down on a cutting board (see how-to, *right*). Using a pair of sharp heavy-duty kitchen shears, cut along one side of the backbone from one end to the other. Repeat on the other side of the backbone; remove backbone (if you like, reserve it for making stock). Using a chef's knife, cut a notch in the keel bone between the breast halves. Turn turkey breast side up. Press down firmly between breast halves to break the keel bone and flatten. Loosen the skin over the breast and thighs using your hands, reaching between the skin and the meat. Pat skin dry with paper towels.
3. Sprinkle salt and pepper on the underside and under the skin of the turkey. In a small bowl combine herbs and sliced garlic. Spread herb mixture evenly under the skin over breast and thighs. Arrange half of the lemon slices under the skin. Place remaining lemon slices and whole garlic on rack in roasting pan.
4. Tuck wing tips under back of turkey. Place turkey on the rack with lemon slices and garlic.
5. Roast until temperature in the thickest part of the thigh registers 175°F, 70 to 80 minutes. Remove turkey from oven. Tent loosely with foil and let stand 15 minutes before carving. Serve turkey with roasted lemon slices and garlic. **Makes 10 servings** (4 oz. each + leftovers).

PER SERVING *153 cal, 5 g fat (1 g sat fat), 92 mg chol, 218 mg sodium, 1 g carb, 0 g fiber, 0 g sugars, 26 g pro.*



1 PREP AND SNIP Here we go—you've got this! Start by removing the neck and giblets from the turkey. Pat dry with paper towels and place breast side down on a clean cutting board. Grab your heavy-duty kitchen shears and begin cutting along one side of the backbone.

2 CUT THROUGH Continue to snip all the way through to the top of the neck.

3 CUT THE OTHER SIDE Repeat along the opposite side of the spine.

4 REMOVE BACKBONE But don't toss it. Our Test Kitchen likes to use it to make homemade stock. Cut the bone in half and toss it in a pot; add water, onion, celery, carrots, and sage (if you have it) and simmer for a couple of hours. (You can do this ahead or freeze the bone for later.)

5 FLATTEN Cut a notch in the bone between breast halves. Flip the turkey breast side up and arrange legs to the sides. Press firmly between the breasts with your hands to flatten.

6 SEASON MEAT Sprinkle all over with salt and pepper; slip herbs, garlic, and lemon slices under the skin. Tuck the wing tips under and, if the legs extend off the pan, wrap in foil so they don't burn.

Types of Turkeys

Here's how to navigate marketing terms listed on turkey labels.

Fresh or Frozen

A fresh turkey is butchered and chilled to a near-freezing temp closer to its sell time. Some believe the flavor is better, but you may pay more for it and will have to make a trip to the store 1 to 2 days before the meal.

Prebrined

If the turkey package lists more ingredients than "turkey," you're likely buying a prebrined bird. This means the turkey contains a saltwater solution (sometimes with spices or flavorings) to extend the shelf life. If you go this route, don't brine the bird at home.

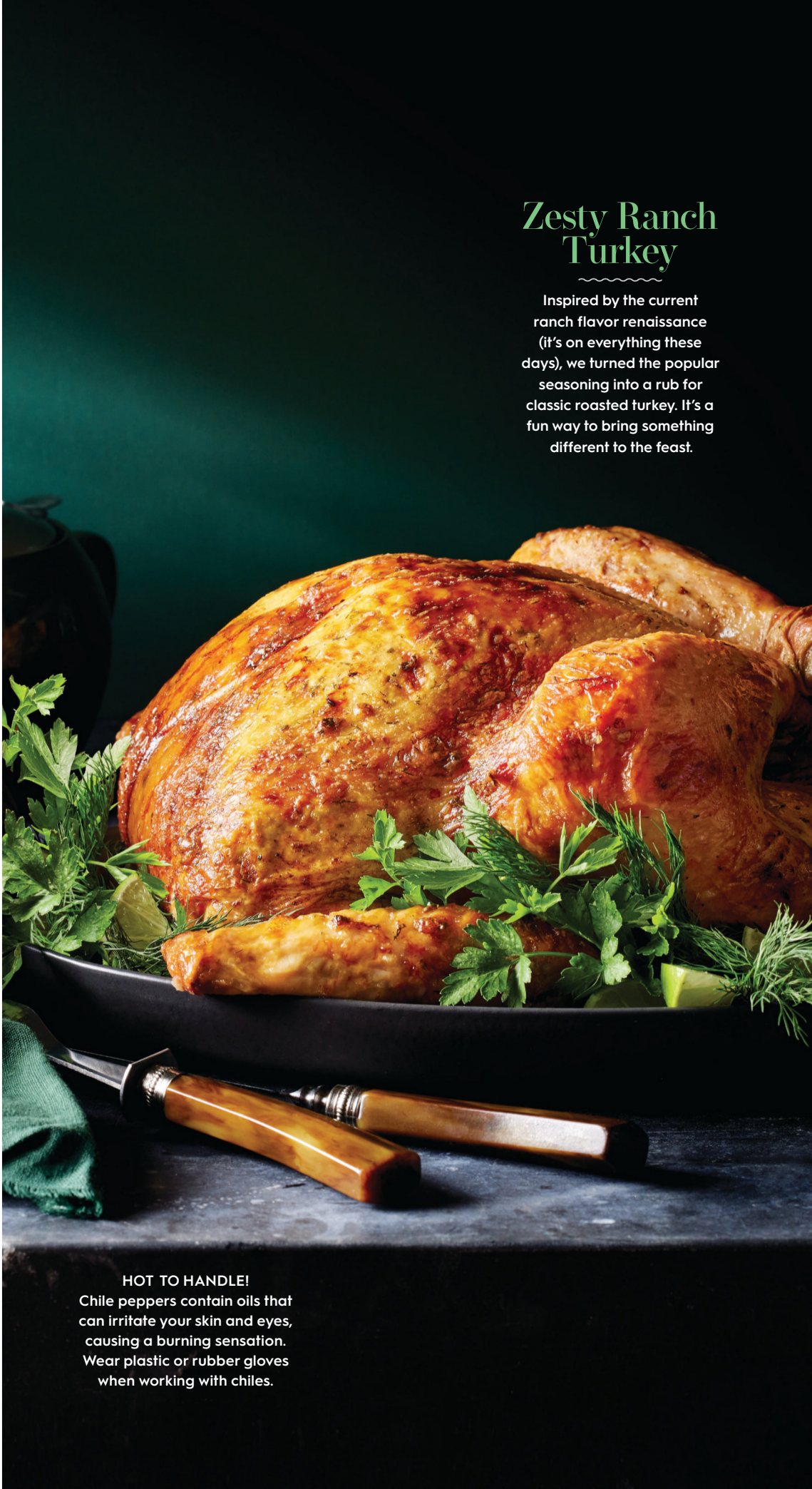
Note We found these take longer to thaw, so budget an extra day to be sure it's ready.

Organic

Specific criteria must be met for a certified organic label, including no added hormones, an organic diet, and access to the outdoors (aka pasture-raised).

Zesty Ranch Turkey

Inspired by the current ranch flavor renaissance (it's on everything these days), we turned the popular seasoning into a rub for classic roasted turkey. It's a fun way to bring something different to the feast.



HOT TO HANDLE!
Chile peppers contain oils that can irritate your skin and eyes, causing a burning sensation. Wear plastic or rubber gloves when working with chiles.

Zesty Ranch Turkey

If using drippings from this turkey to make gravy (p. 42)*, taste the gravy before adding salt. The seasonings from the ranch packet may offer enough.*

HANDS ON 35 minutes **ROAST** 2 hours 45 minutes at 325°F **STAND** 15 minutes

- 1 **12- to 14-lb. turkey**
- ⅔ **cup mayonnaise**
- 1 **1-oz. pkg. dry ranch salad dressing mix**
- 1 **jalapeño, finely chopped (seeded if desired)**
- 1 **Tbsp. chopped fresh dill + 3 to 4 sprigs fresh dill, divided**
- ½ **of an onion, halved**
- ½ **of a lime**
- **Fresh parsley sprigs (optional)**

1. Preheat oven to 325°F. Place a roasting rack in a shallow roasting pan.

2. Remove neck and giblets from turkey; reserve for another use or discard. Pat turkey skin dry with paper towels. Loosen the skin over the breast and thighs using your hands, reaching between the skin and the meat.

3. In a small bowl stir together mayonnaise, ranch dressing mix, jalapeño, and chopped dill. Spread mixture generously under the skin and in the cavity. Spread any remaining mixture over skin. Place dill sprigs, onion, and lime in cavity.

4. Tuck drumstick ends under band of skin across the tail if present or tie drumsticks securely to the tail using 100-percent-cotton kitchen string. Tuck wing tips under back of turkey. Place turkey breast side up on the rack in the roasting pan.

5. Cover turkey loosely with foil. Roast 2¼ hours. Remove foil; cut string between drumsticks. Roast until temperature in the thickest part of the thigh registers 175°F, 30 to 45 minutes more. Remove turkey from oven. Tent with foil. Let stand 15 minutes before carving. If you like, garnish with parsley and/or additional dill and lime.

Makes 10 servings (4 oz. each + leftovers).

PER SERVING *203 cal, 10 g fat (2 g sat fat), 95 mg chol, 196 mg sodium, 1 g carb, 0 g fiber, 1 g sugars, 25 g pro.*

The secret to the zesty flavor for this bird is a creamy rub made with mayo, chopped jalapeño, fresh dill, and a ranch seasoning blend.

1 PREP THE TURKEY

Before roasting, be sure you've thawed the bird completely. (Allow 1 day in the fridge for every 3½ to 4 pounds of turkey.) Remove the neck and giblets from the cavity if present.

2 GENTLY LIFT THE SKIN

Getting the creamy rub under the skin is a must in order to get the most flavor into the meat. Carefully work your fingers under the skin to loosen at the neck and above the legs.

3 SEASON THE BIRD

Gently work the mayo mixture under the skin. We found the easiest way to do this is with a small rubber spatula. Start with a large spoonful at the base and keep working it up and under the skin, getting into all the nooks and crannies.

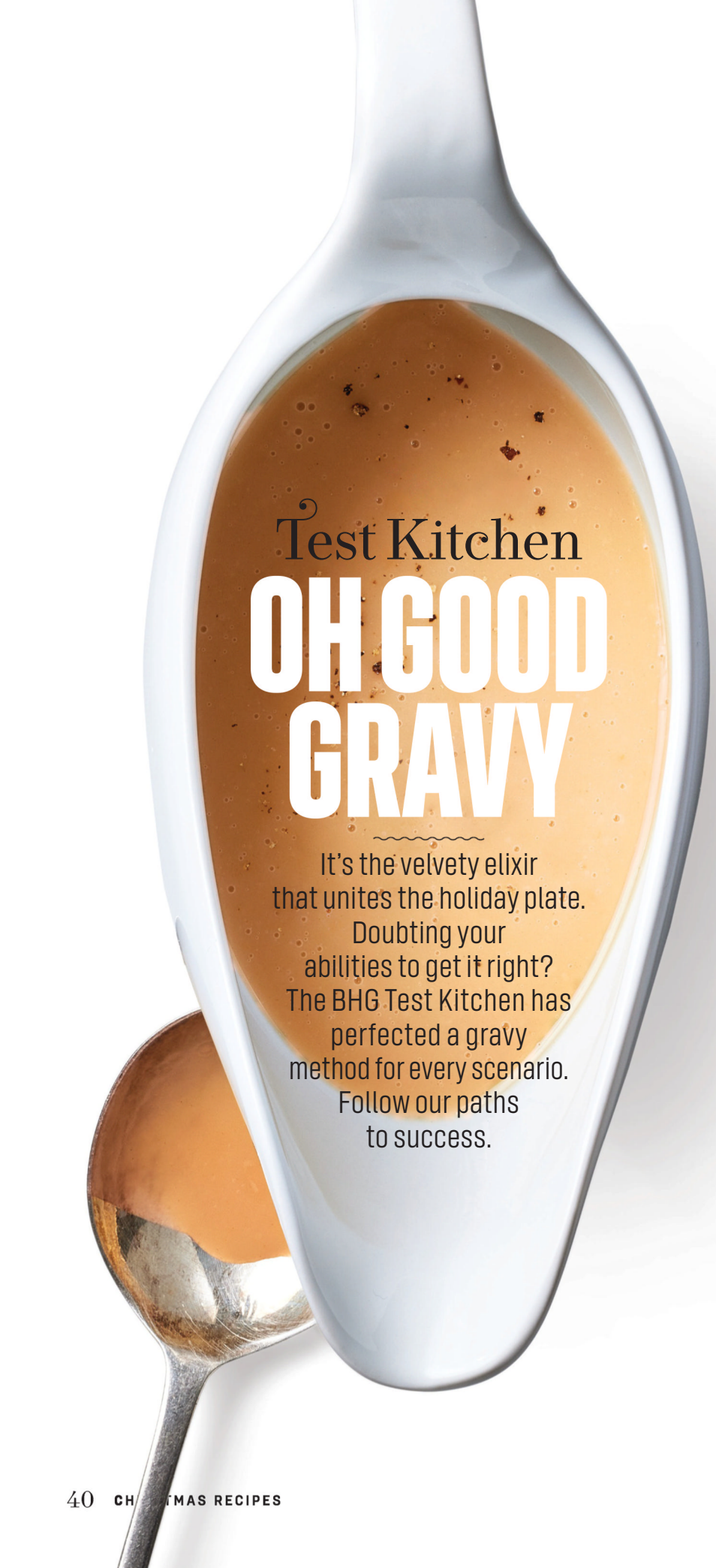
4 COAT THE OUTSIDE

Spread remaining rub over the surface of the turkey. Use kitchen string to tie the legs together and tuck the wings behind the back. This keeps the turkey in a uniform shape and helps with even roasting.

Pro Tip

Temp Check

The safe internal temperature for poultry is 165°F. But our Test Kitchen likes the look and taste of turkey better when the temperature reaches 175°F in the dark meat. Insert an oven-going thermometer into the thigh muscle, making sure the probe does not touch bone.



Test Kitchen OH GOOD GRAVY

It's the velvety elixir that unites the holiday plate. Doubting your abilities to get it right? The BHG Test Kitchen has perfected a gravy method for every scenario. Follow our paths to success.

No, that stresses me out. I'll be overwhelmed.

MAKE IT AHEAD

Prepare Easy Make-Ahead Gravy *(p. 42)*. Customize it by mixing in any of the extras on *p. 43*. Want to add a nutty note, avoid any raw flour taste, and give the gravy richer color? Toast your flour first. Cook in a preheated skillet over medium, stirring occasionally, 5 to 6 minutes (you want a graham-cracker-brown color). Or spread flour evenly in a 9-inch pie plate and microwave on high, stirring every minute (use an oven mitt for hot dish), until toasted, about 10 minutes. (In the oven, this will take about 30 to 45 minutes at 350°F.)

But what if one of my guests can't eat gluten?

No problem. Prepare One Great Gravy *(p. 42)*, except substitute gluten-free all-purpose flour mix. If you don't have any, omit the flour entirely. Bring fat and broth to boiling and stir in ½ cup instant potato flakes for a flour-free gravy with a velvety texture.

START HERE

Are You Cooking a Turkey?

Do you have time to fire up the smoker or grill to prep before the holiday?

Sure.

Smoke or grill some turkey or chicken wings ahead of time and use them to make your favorite recipe for stock. Use this stock in place of broth in the One Great Gravy *(p. 42)* recipe to bring even more smoky savoriness to the table.

No, the bird is already on.

Prepare our Easy Make-Ahead Gravy *(p. 42)* while your bird roasts, and once it's done, add some drippings from the drip pan, simmering to combine, to infuse the finished gravy with smoky flavor.

Yes, smoking or grilling.

Yes, roasting.

Do you feel good about making gravy while the turkey rests?

Totally.

MAKE THE ONE GREAT GRAVY RECIPE, *P. 42*

Customize yours by adding in a few mix-ins *(p. 43)*.

Yes, deep-frying.

You have party-animal energy in the best way. Don't walk away from that. Delegate the gravy to someone else or go with the Easy Make-Ahead Gravy *(p. 42)*.

No, but we still want gravy (and make it vegetarian).

Does everyone like mushrooms?

Yum! We love mushrooms.

THE FANCY VERSION

Soak ½ oz. dried porcini mushrooms in ¾ cup boiling water for 20 minutes. Strain, reserving both mushrooms and soaking liquid. Prepare Easy Make-Ahead Gravy *(p. 42)*, except use reserved soaking liquid and an additional 1½ cups vegetable or mushroom broth. Finely chop reserved mushrooms and add to thickened gravy.

THE QUICK VERSION

Prepare Easy Make-Ahead Gravy *(p. 42)*, except use 1½ cups vegetable or mushroom broth. Whisk 2½ tsp. store-bought umami seasoning blend into thickened gravy. (We like the mushroom-based versions from Trader Joe's and Target.)

No fungi for us, thanks.

Prepare Easy Make-Ahead Gravy *(p. 42)*, except use 1½ cups vegetable broth. Need a boost of umami? Add 1 tsp. Marmite, a beloved British condiment spread made with yeast extract. (Think of it as a stronger, bouillon-paste version of nutritional yeast.) It's loaded with savoriness and is vegan, so it's a great vegetarian-friendly seasoning.

Gravy SOS

We have a rescue for any gravy pitfall.

TOO THIN?
If your gravy is runny, you can simmer it longer to thicken, but if it's go time and the gravy still looks watery, there's a faster fix: Whisk in a spoonful (and up to ½ cup) of instant potato flakes. It might sound silly to add potato to a sauce for mashed potatoes, but this truly is an easy way to give gravy a velvety texture.

LUMPY?
Lumps form in gravy when flour added to hot liquid sticks to itself and forms small dry pouches that no amount of whisking seems to break up. Sure, you can put it through a strainer, but an even easier solution is to use an immersion blender to smooth things out right in the saucepan. Another option is to give it a quick whir in a regular blender (Take caution—carefully fill the blender only a third of the way; be sure to vent the top and cover with a dish towel to catch any hot splatter.)

BROKEN?
If your gravy looks curdled or has an oily top layer, it's likely the emulsion of flour and fat that thickens the mixture has split or broken. Fix it by adding a splash or two of warm water and whisking vigorously to restore the balance of liquid and fat.

BORING?
Underseasoned broth can sometimes make a gravy that tastes flat. Marmite is our secret ingredient. A tiny teaspoon of the sticky condiment (see "No Fungi for Us," *p. 41*) packs meaty savoriness, even in vegetarian gravies. You also can try a splash of soy sauce.

BASE Recipes

ONE GREAT GRAVY

Makes about 2 cups.
Stir 1 cup turkey broth into the pan with the drippings from a roasted turkey, scraping up any browned bits from bottom of pan. Pour mixture into a 2-cup glass measuring cup. Skim and reserve fat. If necessary, add enough melted butter to the reserved fat to make ¼ cup. Add enough additional broth to make 2 cups total liquid. Pour the ¼ cup fat into a medium saucepan (discard any remaining fat). Whisk in ¼ cup all-purpose flour and ¼ tsp. each salt and pepper until smooth. Add broth mixture all at once to saucepan, stirring until smooth. Cook and stir over medium until thickened and bubbly. Season to taste with additional salt and pepper.

EASY MAKE-AHEAD GRAVY

Makes about 2 cups.
Heat ¼ cup ghee, vegetable oil, or store-bought schmaltz (chicken fat) in a saucepan over medium. Whisk in ¼ cup all-purpose flour and ¼ tsp. each salt and pepper. Add 2 cups turkey or chicken broth all at once to saucepan, stirring until smooth. Cook and stir until thickened and bubbly. Season to taste with additional salt and pepper. Store in a closed container in the fridge up to 3 days.

Gravy Mix-Ins

Customize your gravy by adding any of the following:

SOMETHING RICH
Creamy herbed or blue cheese.

SOMETHING GREEN
Finely chopped herbs like rosemary, parsley, chives, thyme, or sage.

SOMETHING EARTHY
Sautéed mushrooms, shallots, or slivered dried tomatoes.

SOMETHING BRIGHT
Balsamic glaze, whole grain mustard, or a splash of apple cider.

What a HAM

Make the main event easier on yourself with a beautifully baked (yet simple to prepare) ham. Choose from three luscious glazes to customize the flavor.

Holiday Ham

HANDS ON 15 minutes
BAKE 1 hour 30 minutes at 325°F

1 **6- to 8-lb. bone-in fully cooked ham, rump half**
1 **recipe Cranberry-Orange Glaze, Ginger Beer Glaze, or Raspberry-Chipotle Glaze *(right)***

1. Preheat oven to 325°F. Score ham by making diagonal cuts ¼ inch deep in a diamond pattern at 1-inch intervals. Place ham on a rack in a shallow roasting pan. Insert an oven-going thermometer into the center of the ham (thermometer should not touch bone). Cover with foil. **2.** Bake 1¼ hours. Uncover; bake until thermometer registers 140°F, 15 to 60 minutes more. Meanwhile, prepare desired glaze. Brush ham with some of the glaze during the last 15 minutes of baking. Carve ham. Serve with remaining glaze. **Makes 20 servings** (3 oz. ham + about 1 Tbsp. glaze each).

PER SERVING WITH CRANBERRY-ORANGE GLAZE *164 cal, 3 g fat (1 g sat fat), 74 mg chol, 891 mg sodium, 7 g carb, 0 g fiber, 1 g sugars, 27 g pro.*

PLATTER PERFECTION

Add colorful additions to the platter to make your ham stand out. Fresh produce and herb garnishes are naturally beautiful and take little effort. Here are some ideas.

- Salad greens with fresh pears and cranberries
- Fresh herbs, such as sage, thyme, and rosemary
- Orange wedges and pomegranate seeds
- Seared lemon or orange halves and loose cranberries
- Roasted carrots, parsnips, and pearl onions

Add a Glaze

Cranberry-Orange Glaze

In a small saucepan combine 1 cup cranberry relish or orange-cranberry marmalade, ¼ cup orange juice, and 1 tsp. chopped fresh thyme or sage. Bring to boiling; reduce heat. Simmer, uncovered, until mixture is thickened to glazing consistency, 5 to 10 minutes. Makes 1¼ cups.

Ginger Beer Glaze

In a 3-qt. saucepan combine one 12-oz. can ginger beer, 1 cup pineapple or orange juice, ¼ cup packed brown sugar, 2 Tbsp. Dijon mustard, ¼ tsp. ground ginger, and ⅛ tsp. ground allspice. Bring to boiling; reduce heat. Gently boil, uncovered, until mixture is thickened to glazing consistency, 35 to 40 minutes. Whisk in 1 Tbsp. each salted butter and fresh lemon juice. Makes ⅔ cup.

Raspberry-Chipotle Glaze

In a small saucepan heat 1 Tbsp. olive oil over medium. Add 2 cloves garlic, minced; cook until fragrant, 30 seconds. Stir in 1 cup raspberry preserves, 1 Tbsp. finely chopped canned chipotle pepper in adobo sauce, and ½ tsp. dried thyme, crushed. Heat through. Stir in 2 Tbsp. fresh lime juice. Makes 1¼ cups.

Side HUSTLE

Host smarter, not harder. When oven space is tight this holiday, power up your countertop appliances to create one or more of these easy yet elegant dishes.

Slow Cooker

Sweet Potatoes with Candied Bacon

If you're in search of a totable crowd-pleaser to take to Friendsgiving this year, here it is. Transport our nutmeg-scented mashed sweets in the slow cooker, then serve candied bacon twists on the side or crumbled over top. Heat purchased bacon jam (it's a little like tomato jam) in the microwave and drizzle over all. We guarantee compliments.

Sweet Potatoes with Candied Bacon

HANDS ON 20 minutes
SLOW COOK 3 hours (high) or 6 hours (low)

- **3¾ lb. sweet potatoes, peeled, halved lengthwise, and cut into 1-inch half-moons**
- **¾ cup low-sodium chicken broth or vegetable broth**
- **⅓ cup half-and-half or whole milk, warmed**
- **¼ cup salted butter**
- **1 Tbsp. packed brown sugar**
- **1 tsp. freshly grated nutmeg**
- **Pinch cayenne pepper (optional)**
- **¼ cup purchased hot pepper bacon jam (optional)**
- **Fresh thyme (optional)**
- **1 recipe Candied Pecan Bacon Twists (optional) (*p. 48*)**

1. In a 6-qt. slow cooker combine sweet potatoes, broth, and ½ tsp. *salt.* Cover and cook on high until very tender, 3 to 4 hours, or on low 6 to 8 hours.
2. Add half-and-half, butter, brown sugar, nutmeg, and cayenne (if using). Mash with a potato masher until mostly smooth (you can hold the sweet potatoes in the slow cooker on warm setting up to 2 hours).
3. Microwave bacon jam (if using) on high until pourable, 15 to 20 seconds. Spoon over potatoes, then top with fresh thyme (if using) and Candied Pecan Bacon Twists. **Makes 8 servings** (¾ cup each).

PER SERVING *202 cal, 7 g fat (4 g sat fat), 19 mg chol, 325 mg sodium, 33 g carb, 5 g fiber, 8 g sugars, 3 g pro.*

Air Fryer

Fruit, Wild Rice, and Sage Stuffed Delicata

Your air fryer is essentially a mini convection oven, and you can use it to speedily roast a hearty dish like these delicata boats filled with mushrooms and wild rice. This side is also substantial enough to fill the role of main dish for any vegetarian guests.

Candied Pecan Bacon Twists

PICTURED ON *P. 47.*

HANDS ON 10 minutes **BAKE** 35 minutes at 375°F

- ½ **cup pecan pieces**
- 6 **Tbsp. packed brown sugar**
- ⅛ **tsp. cayenne pepper**
- 1 **lb. thick-cut bacon (10 to 14 slices)**
- **Fresh thyme (optional)**

1. Preheat oven to 375°F. In a food processor combine pecans, brown sugar, and cayenne. Cover and process until pecans are finely chopped.

2. Line a 15×10-inch baking pan with foil. Place pecan mixture in a shallow dish. Dredge bacon strips, one at a time, in the pecan mixture, turning to coat both sides. Twist bacon strips four or five times. Arrange twists in the prepared pan, pressing ends onto pan to secure twists.

3. Bake 20 minutes. Using tongs, carefully turn bacon twists over, making sure to maintain twists. Sprinkle with thyme (if using).

4. Bake until bacon is brown and crisp, 15 to 20 minutes more (watch closely to avoid burning). Transfer bacon to a wire rack set over paper towels to drain. Bacon will crisp a bit more as it cools. **Makes 10 twists.**

MAKE AHEAD For peak crispness, bacon twists are best made ahead then reheated before serving. Store baked twists in an airtight container in the refrigerator up to 3 days. Reheat in a 350°F air fryer or oven 5 to 7 minutes.

PER TWIST *237 cal, 21 g fat (6 g sat fat), 30 mg chol, 342 mg sodium, 6 g carb, 1 g fiber, 6 g sugars, 7 g pro.*

Fruit, Wild Rice, and Sage Stuffed Delicata

HANDS ON 20 minutes **AIR FRY** 14 minutes at 400°F

- 3 **delicata squash**
- 1½ **cups (3 oz.) fresh shiitake mushrooms, caps chopped and stems discarded**
- ½ **cup chopped celery**
- 2 **green onions, sliced, white and green parts separated**
- 1 **Tbsp. chopped fresh sage**
- 2 **cloves garlic, minced**
- ½ **cup dry white wine or low-sodium vegetable broth**
- 1½ **cups cooked unseasoned long grain and wild rice blend**
- 1 **cup shredded Gruyère cheese**
- ½ **cup chopped roasted cashews**
- ¼ **cup dried cranberries, golden raisins, and/or chopped dried apricots**

1. Preheat air fryer to 400°F. Cut squash in half lengthwise. Scoop out and discard seeds. Brush 1 Tbsp. *olive oil* all over squash; season with a few pinches of *salt* and *black pepper*. Place cut sides down in air-fryer basket and cook until tender when pierced with a fork, 8 to 10 minutes.

2. Meanwhile, heat 2 Tbsp. additional olive oil in a medium saucepan over medium-high. Add mushrooms, celery, and white parts of green onions. Cook and stir until mushrooms have released their liquid and begin to brown, about 4 minutes. Add sage and garlic; cook and stir until fragrant, about 45 seconds. Add wine; simmer until reduced by half, about 1 minute. Remove from heat.

3. Stir in rice, cheese, green parts of green onions, cashews, and dried fruit. Season with salt and pepper. Scoop a heaping ½ cup of the rice mixture into each squash half.

4. Air-fry, in batches if needed, until filling is heated through (165°F), 6 to 8 minutes. If you like, top with additional fresh sage leaves. **Makes 6 servings** (1 squash half each).

PER SERVING *384 cal, 19 g fat (6 g sat fat), 24 mg chol, 341 mg sodium, 45 g carb, 5 g fiber, 13 g sugars, 13 g pro.*

Lemon-Dijon Broccolini with Spiced Nuts and Goat Cheese

START TO FINISH 20 minutes

- **1 cup whole raw or unsalted roasted almonds**
- **2 tsp. chopped fresh rosemary**
- **4 Tbsp. olive oil, divided**
- **½ tsp. Aleppo pepper or hot paprika**
- **½ tsp. garlic powder**
- **1 lb. Broccolini**
- **1 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice**
- **1 Tbsp. Dijon mustard**
- **3 Tbsp. soft goat cheese (a soft-ripened variety like Bûcheron is best)**

1. In a 9-inch glass pie plate combine almonds and rosemary; drizzle with 1 Tbsp. olive oil and toss to coat. Microwave, uncovered, on high, 4 minutes, stirring every minute until nuts are golden.
2. Add Aleppo pepper, garlic powder, and ½ tsp. *salt;* toss to combine. Microwave on high 1 minute more. The nuts will become crunchy as they cool. Chop ¼ cup of the nuts for topping Broccolini. (Reserve remaining nuts to pass at the table or save for snacking.)
3. Trim ¼ inch off ends of Broccolini, then place in a 2-qt. glass baking dish. Add 1 cup *water.* Cover with plastic wrap; vent one corner. Microwave on high until the Broccolini is bright green and crisp-tender, 3 to 4 minutes.
4. Meanwhile, for dressing, in a small bowl whisk together lemon juice, Dijon, and remaining 3 Tbsp. olive oil.
5. Drain Broccolini (snip large stalks in half). Drizzle with dressing; toss to coat. Transfer to a serving platter. Top with spoonfuls of goat cheese and sprinkle with the chopped nuts. Season with salt and *black pepper.* **Makes 4 servings.**
PER SERVING *411 cal, 34 g fat (5 g sat fat), 5 mg chol, 461 mg sodium, 17 g carb, 6 g fiber, 4 g sugars, 14 g pro.*

Microwave

Lemon-Dijon Broccolini with Spiced Nuts and Goat Cheese

Broccoli and cheese have long been a good match. For this fancy dish, we selected slender stalks of Broccolini (a cousin of broccoli) and a soft-ripened goat cheese, such as Bûcheron, which melts when warm and resembles Brie with bloomy flavor notes. Our Test Kitchen claims it's the quickest and most delicious side we've ever tested!

Pressure Cooker + Air Fryer

Beet Salad with Pretzel Croutons and Balsamic Currants

This sweater-weather panzanella salad swaps in rainbow beets for the usual tomatoes and toasty pretzel roll croutons in place of crusty Italian bread. Steam beets in a pressure cooker on high for just 18 minutes (it makes peeling them super easy). A whole head of garlic cooks alongside the beets to flavor the balsamic dressing, and tiny vinegar-soaked currants offer a piquant burst.

Beet Salad with Pretzel Croutons and Balsamic Currants

HANDS ON 15 minutes
AIR FRY 5 minutes at 375°F
PRESSURE COOK 18 minutes

- **2 pretzel rolls, torn into bite-size pieces (4 cups)**
- **6 Tbsp. olive oil, divided**
- **¼ cup balsamic vinegar**
- **3 Tbsp. dried currants**
- **1 bulb garlic**
- **5 medium beets (5 oz. each)**
- **6 cups lightly packed spinach and arugula**
- **6 slices blue cheese**

1. Preheat air fryer to 375°F. In a large bowl toss the torn rolls with 3 Tbsp. of the olive oil and ¼ tsp. each *salt* and *black pepper.* Arrange in an even layer in air-fryer basket. Air-fry, stirring twice, until croutons are golden, about 5 minutes. Meanwhile, in a small bowl combine vinegar and currants; set aside.

2. Place a steamer basket in a 6-qt. electric pressure cooker. Add 1 cup *water* to cooker. Cut ½ inch off the top of the garlic bulb. Place beets and garlic in steamer basket; lock lid. Set cooker on high pressure to cook 18 minutes. Let stand to release pressure naturally, 15 minutes. Release remaining pressure. Open lid carefully.

3. Peel beets under cool running water, then cut into bite-size wedges; place in a medium bowl. Drain currants, reserving vinegar. Add currants to beets. Season with salt and pepper.

4. For dressing, squeeze garlic cloves from bulb into a large serving bowl; mash until smooth. Whisk in reserved vinegar and remaining 3 Tbsp. olive oil. Add spinach, arugula, and croutons; toss to coat. Add beets and currants; toss to combine. Serve with cheese slices. **Makes 6 to 8 servings.**

PER SERVING *356 cal, 23 g fat (7 g sat fat), 21 mg chol, 733 mg sodium, 29 g carb, 5 g fiber, 15 g sugars, 10 g pro.*

Air Fryer

Maple-Glazed Carrot Phyllo Tart

You're going to want to keep this versatile, garlicky herbed cheese tart recipe on hand. The base is a savory cheesecake-like filling that pairs well with almost any topping. We finished this one with carrots caramelized in an air fryer and a maple-cider glaze.

Maple-Glazed Carrot Phyllo Tart

HANDS ON 30 minutes **BAKE** 30 minutes at 350°F **AIR FRY** 10 minutes at 400°F **COOK** 5 minutes

- **⅓ cup salted butter, melted**
- **8 sheets frozen phyllo dough (14×9-inch), thawed**
- **1 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened**
- **⅓ cup sour cream**
- **¼ cup chopped carrot greens or fresh flat-leaf parsley**
- **¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese**
- **1 egg**
- **2 cloves garlic, minced**
- **2 tsp. chopped fresh thyme**
- **1 lb. multicolor carrots (about 2 bunches)**
- **2 Tbsp. pure maple syrup**
- **1 Tbsp. cider vinegar**
- **Fresh parsley sprigs (optional)**

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Coat a 9-inch pie plate with *nonstick cooking spray.*

2. Dip a pastry brush or basting brush in the melted butter and drizzle sparingly on one sheet of phyllo; brush evenly over phyllo sheet. Repeat with remaining phyllo sheets and butter, offsetting the sheets to create an uneven sawtooth edge around the stack. Center the phyllo stack in the pie plate and tuck the excess pastry hanging over the side under to create a ½- to 1-inch edge all around.

3. In a medium bowl beat cream cheese with a mixer on low to medium 30 seconds. Add sour cream, chopped carrot greens, Parmesan, egg, garlic, thyme, ½ tsp. *salt,* and ¼ tsp. *freshly ground black pepper.* Beat on high until fluffy and smooth, 4 minutes. (If your mixer has a whisk attachment, use that.) Spoon mixture into the phyllo-lined pie plate, smoothing top with a rubber spatula.

4. Bake until the filling is puffed and golden brown in places and a knife inserted in the center comes out clean, about 30 minutes.

5. Preheat air fryer to 400°F. Cut carrots in half or quarters lengthwise until they are ¼ to ½ inch wide at the thickest end. Drizzle with 1 Tbsp. *olive oil* and toss to coat. Sprinkle with ¼ tsp. salt and a couple grinds of pepper. Place half of the carrots in a single layer in air fryer. Air-fry 6 minutes. Toss carrots. Air-fry until some browning appears and carrots are very tender, about 4 minutes more. Repeat with remaining carrots.

6. In a small saucepan whisk together maple syrup and vinegar. Bring to simmering over medium; reduce heat to medium-low. Simmer until reduced by one-third to half, 5 to 8 minutes.

7. Top warm tart with carrots. Drizzle with maple syrup glaze. If you like, garnish with parsley. **Makes 6 servings.**

MAKE AHEAD Prepare as directed through Step 4. Cover tart with foil and store in the refrigerator up to 3 days. To serve, preheat oven to 350°F. Bake tart 10 to 15 minutes (cover tart loosely with foil if phyllo dough starts to overbrown). Meanwhile, continue as directed in Step 5.

PER SERVING *406 cal, 31 g fat (17 g sat fat), 105 mg chol, 678 mg sodium, 26 g carb, 3 g fiber, 10 g sugars, 8 g pro.*

On a Holiday Roll

This season we're taking bread beyond its usual place in the humble basket. Twist and shape two delicious doughs into center-of-the-table status.

Multigrain Roll Wreath,

p. 54

Assorted grains, including oats and wheat germ, join honey, herbs, and seeds to create surprisingly light-textured rolls. Craft our easy-serve wreath by rolling dough into balls and arranging the balls in two concentric circles.

Garlic and Herb Swirl Bread,

p. 54

With its ribbons of dried tomatoes, crushed red pepper, Parmesan cheese, and a trio of fresh herbs, this intriguingly shaped loaf channels our favorite pizza flavors. Finish it with a generous brushing of melted butter. If you're a fan of dusting extra Parm on pizza before taking that first bite, sprinkle away.

Tips for Success

Kneading Know-How

Kneading develops gluten, which gives the dough structure and allows it to stretch and expand as it rises. To knead by hand: On a lightly floured surface fold and push dough with heel of your hand. Turn and repeat until it is soft, smooth, and slightly tacky—but not sticky. It should take 3 to 5 minutes.

Foolproof Proof

During proofing, the yeast gets to work consuming sugars to create gas that inflates the gluten structure. Proofing requires a warm environment (80°F to 85°F). If you don't have a warm draft-free place in your kitchen, use your microwave or oven. First microwave a 2-cup measure filled with water until it begins to boil. Place measure and dough bowl in the microwave or oven and close the door. Dough is done proofing when indentations remain when pressed with two fingers.

Multigrain Roll Wreath

PICTURED ON *P. 52*
HANDS ON 35 minutes
RISE 1 hour 30 minutes
BAKE 18 minutes at 375°F

- **4½ to 5 cups all-purpose flour, divided**
- **2 pkg. active dry yeast (4½ tsp.)**
- **1½ cups milk**
- **¾ cup salted butter, cut up**
- **⅓ cup honey**
- **3 eggs, divided**
- **1 cup whole wheat flour**
- **½ cup quick-cooking rolled oats**
- **¼ cup toasted wheat germ**
- **1 tsp. each white and/or black sesame seeds, chia seeds, and flaxseeds**
- **2 Tbsp. finely chopped fresh herbs, such as oregano, thyme, rosemary, and/or sage**
- **Grape tomatoes (optional)**

1. In a large bowl combine 2 cups of the all-purpose flour and the yeast. In a medium saucepan combine milk, butter, honey, and 2 tsp. *salt.* Heat and stir until warm (120°F to 130°F). Add to flour mixture. Add two of the eggs. Beat with a mixer on medium 30 seconds. Beat on high 3 minutes, scraping bowl as needed. Beat in whole wheat flour, oats, and wheat germ. Beat in as much of remaining all-purpose flour as possible. Stir in as much of remaining flour as you can.
2. Turn dough out onto a lightly floured surface. Knead in enough remaining flour to make a smooth, elastic dough (5 to 8 minutes). Shape into a ball; place in a buttered bowl, turning to coat dough surface. Cover; let rise in a warm place until double in size (1 to 1½ hours).
3. Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper. Draw a 12-inch circle on paper. (A round baking pan makes a good template.) Turn paper over so marked side is down.
4. Punch dough down. Turn out onto a lightly floured surface. Cover and let rest 10 minutes. Divide dough into six portions. Divide each portion into six pieces. Shape into 36 balls, pinching edges of dough under each ball to form a tight, seamless round. Arrange 22 balls close together on the drawn circle. Arrange remaining 14 balls about 1 inch inside the circle of dough balls. (Rolls will expand to touch during baking.) Cover loosely with a towel and let rise in a warm place until nearly double in size (30 to 45 minutes).
5. Preheat oven to 375°F. Whisk together remaining egg and 1 Tbsp. *water.* Brush rolls with egg mixture. Sprinkle with seeds and chopped herbs. Bake until golden brown, about 18 minutes. If you like, garnish with grape tomatoes and/or additional herbs. **Makes 36 rolls.**
PER ROLL *132 cal, 5 g fat (3 g sat fat), 26 mg chol, 171 mg sodium, 19 g carb, 1 g fiber, 3 g sugars, 4 g pro.*

Garlic and Herb Swirl Bread

PICTURED ON *P. 53*
HANDS ON 30 minutes
RISE 1 hour 45 minutes
BAKE 30 minutes at 375°F

- **3½ to 4 cups all-purpose flour, divided**
- **1 pkg. active dry yeast (2¼ tsp.)**
- **¾ cup milk**
- **6 Tbsp. salted butter, softened, divided**
- **2 Tbsp. sugar**
- **3 eggs, lightly beaten**
- **½ cup finely chopped fresh basil**
- **¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese**
- **2 Tbsp. finely chopped oil-packed dried tomatoes, patted dry**
- **1½ Tbsp. chopped fresh thyme**
- **1 Tbsp. finely chopped fresh oregano**
- **3 cloves garlic, minced**
- **¼ tsp. crushed red pepper**

1. In a large bowl stir together 2 cups of the flour and the yeast. In a small saucepan combine milk, 2 Tbsp. of the butter, the sugar, and 1 tsp. *kosher salt.* Heat and stir until warm (120°F to 130°F). Stir milk mixture and eggs into flour mixture. Stir in as much of remaining flour as you can.
2. Turn dough out onto a lightly floured surface. Knead in enough remaining flour to make a soft dough that is smooth, lightly tacky, and elastic (about 3 minutes). Shape dough into a ball. Place in a lightly greased bowl, turning to coat surface. Cover and let rise in a warm place until nearly double in size (about 1 hour).
3. Meanwhile, for herb butter, combine remaining 4 Tbsp. butter and remaining ingredients until combined.
4. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Punch dough down. Turn out onto a lightly floured surface. Cover; let rest 10 minutes. Roll dough into an 18×12-inch rectangle. Spread herb butter over dough, leaving a 1-inch border on one long side. Roll up rectangle, starting from filled long side; seal seam with fingertips. Using a serrated knife, cut roll in half lengthwise, leaving 1 inch intact at one end. Turn dough strips cut sides up; carefully twist over each other. Pinch ends together to seal.
5. Starting at top, coil the rope like a snake, stopping halfway. Coil other half of rope in opposite direction to create a tight S shape. Transfer loaf to prepared baking sheet. Lightly cover with greased plastic wrap and let rise in a warm place until nearly double in size (about 45 minutes).
6. Preheat oven to 375°F. Bake until golden brown and internal temperature registers 200°F, about 30 minutes. Brush warm bread with additional melted butter. **Makes 12 servings.**
PER SERVING *232 cal, 8 g fat (5 g sat fat), 64 mg chol, 198 mg sodium, 32 g carb, 1 g fiber, 3 g sugars, 7 g pro.*

STEP-BY-STEP

As impressive as this layered bread looks, the shaping is fairly simple when you follow these basic steps and visual cues. Start by filling and rolling up the dough as if you're making cinnamon rolls.

1 Roll dough
This dough is elastic and easy to manage. Roll into an 18×12-inch rectangle and spread with herb butter. Starting from a long side, roll up tightly.

2 Pinch seam
With your fingers, pinch the seam so the roll is completely sealed. This will keep the filling from escaping while baking. Flip roll so the seam faces down.

3 Cut and turn
Use a serrated knife to slice the roll in half lengthwise, leaving an inch at one end intact. Turn halves so filling faces up and won't fall out.

4 Twist dough
Carefully twist the dough strips over each other, keeping filling facing up. Pinch ends together and adjust dough as needed so it is uniform.

5 Coil and shape
Starting from the top, coil the twisted dough like a snake to the right, stopping halfway down. It will look like the top of the letter S.

6 Shape and tuck
Coil bottom of the braid up in opposite direction (to the left) to complete a tight S shape. Tuck under ends and gently shape into an oval loaf.

holiday cookie dress-up

Turn store-bought snacks (peanut butter sandwich cookies, chocolate sandwich cookies, and rice cereal treats) into the cutest and easiest holiday goodies on the cookie platter.

simple & festive

Sweet Trees

1 Peanut Butter Sandwich Cookie Dip the cookie in melted white candy coating. Using a pouch of green frosting with a round tip, pipe a triangle on the cookie. Fill in the middle of the triangle with the frosting in a zigzag motion. Add gold and white candies or sprinkles and top with a mini star candy.

2 Chocolate Sandwich Cookie Dip the cookie in melted white candy coating. Using a green frosting pouch with a round tip, pipe a tree in the center of the cookie by making a zigzag motion. Top with a mini star candy. Using a tube of brown frosting (or melted chocolate in a resealable plastic bag with the corner snipped), pipe a trunk at the bottom.

3 Rice Cereal Treats Using a pouch of green frosting with a round tip, pipe a tree in the center of the rice cereal treat in a zigzag motion. Sprinkle with red coarse sugar and top with a mini star candy. Push a pretzel stick into the bottom of the treat for a trunk.

1 2
3

creative & cute

Holiday Reindeer

1 Peanut Butter Sandwich Cookie Use a tube of brown or black frosting to pipe around the lower half of a small pretzel twist. Press pretzel onto the cookie frosting side down to adhere. Using a tube of black frosting with a round tip, pipe eyes. Add a dot of the black frosting to the bottom of the cookie and press a red hot candy into the frosting for the nose.

2 Chocolate Sandwich Cookie Spread the top of the cookie with canned chocolate frosting. For antlers, add two halves of a large pretzel. Using a tube of black frosting with a round tip, pipe eyes. Add a dot of the black frosting to the bottom of the cookie and press a red hot candy into the frosting for the nose.

3 Rice Cereal Treats Add canned chocolate frosting to a resealable plastic bag and snip off one corner. Pipe antlers on the top half of the treat. Using a tube of black frosting with a round tip, pipe eyes. Add a dot of the black frosting to the bottom of the treat and press a red hot candy into the frosting for the nose.

1 2
3

cheerful & fun

Magical Snowmen

1 Peanut Butter Sandwich Cookie Spread canned white frosting on the cookie. Use a tube of red frosting with a round tip to pipe a half-circle on the top left of the cookie for the snowman's hat. Add a halved mini marshmallow to the top of the hat for a pom-pom. Use a tube of black frosting with a round tip to pipe eyes, a mouth, and buttons. Use a tube of orange frosting to pipe the nose.

2 Chocolate Sandwich Cookie Dip the cookie in melted white candy coating. Press half of a mini chocolate-peanut butter candy cup in the top left corner for the hat. Use a tube of black frosting with a round tip to pipe eyes and mouth. Use a tube of orange frosting to pipe the nose.

3 Rice Cereal Treats Cut a piece of red fruit leather to make a scarf. Use a tube of white frosting to pipe a line across the treat; press the fruit leather onto the frosting. Use a tube of black frosting with a round tip to pipe eyes and buttons. Cut a piece of orange sour fruit candy strips into a triangle for the nose. Pipe a dot of white frosting on treat; press the orange candy into the frosting to attach.

1 2
3

merry & bright

Jolly Santas

1 Peanut Butter Sandwich Cookie Dip the top of the cookie in melted red candy coating and sprinkle with red decorative sugar. Attach half of a mini marshmallow to the top of the hat for a pom-pom. Dip the bottom of the cookie in melted white candy coating and sprinkle with shredded coconut. Use a tube of white frosting with a flat tip to pipe a hat edge at the bottom of the red hat. Use tube of black frosting with a round tip to pipe eyes. Pipe a dot of frosting and attach a red hot candy for a nose.

2 Chocolate Sandwich Cookie Spread the top of the cookie with canned red frosting. Use a tube of black frosting with a round tip to pipe buttons and a belt. Use a tube of yellow frosting with a round tip to pipe belt buckle.

3 Rice Cereal Treats Spread canned red frosting over top of treat, leaving the bottom right corner unfrosted. Sprinkle with red decorative sugar. Use a tube of white frosting to pipe a dot for a pom-pom and a line at the bottom of the hat. Sprinkle the white frosting with shredded coconut. Use a tube of black frosting with a round tip to pipe eyes. Pipe a dot of frosting and attach a red hot candy for the nose.

Decorating Tool Kit

We kept these decorating techniques as simple as possible, using premade frosting, easy-to-find candy coating, and basic sprinkles and decorations available anywhere.

A ***PLASTIC BAGS*** In a pinch, heavy-duty resealable bags work for piping melted chocolate or canned frosting. Fill bag with chocolate, then cut off one small corner from which to squeeze it out.

B ***PARCHMENT PAPER*** Place freshly iced cookies on parchment paper for easy cleanup.

C ***WIRE RACK*** If candy coating or icing is still dripping from cookies after dipping, place them on a wire rack set over parchment so coating drips off rather than pools.

D ***FOOD COLORING*** Find coloring in gel, paste, or liquid form and use it to tint white icing.

E ***PURCHASED FROSTINGS*** You'll find many different flavors in cans, and a range of colors in tubes and pouches (some even come with tips you can change out). Use these to create base coats or to add highlights.

F ***OFFSET SPATULA*** This tool works well for smoothing the frosting or creating texture.

G ***SPRINKLES, CANDIES & MORE*** Use whatever you like to create features on your treats: pretzels, small candies, fruit leather, coconut, chopped nuts, or specialty sprinkles.

H ***CANDY COATING & ALMOND BARK*** Candy coating disks come in a wide range of colors to make cookies festive. Almond bark comes in vanilla and chocolate. Melt these products as directed on package, then dip cookies to coat, letting excess drip off. Put cookies on a wire rack over parchment paper so excess can drip off rather than pool around base of cookie.

Vintage Christmas Feast

Herb-Rubbed Prime Rib, *p. 69*

Here's a decadent way to visit Christmases past without all of Mr. Scrooge's drama. We present a perfectly cooked prime rib with all the classic trimmings and sides to captivate your guests. To end the evening—a rich and chocolaty yule log cake.

Brown Sugar-Glazed Carrots

HANDS ON 5 minutes **COOK** 9 minutes

- **3 lb. small carrots with stems**
- **¼ cup salted butter**
- **¼ cup packed brown sugar**
- **½ tsp. salt**
- **Black pepper**

1. Peel carrots, leaving stems attached. Halve any large carrots lengthwise. In a deep 12-inch skillet cook carrots, covered, in boiling salted water until crisp-tender, about 8 minutes. Drain; remove carrots from pan. Wipe out pan.

2. In the same skillet combine butter, brown sugar, and ½ tsp. salt. Cook and stir over medium until butter melts and mixture is combined. Add carrots. Toss and stir until glazed, 1 to 2 minutes. Season to taste with pepper and additional salt. **Makes 12 servings** (⅔ cup each).

PER SERVING *98 cal, 4 g fat (2 g sat fat), 10 mg chol, 231 mg sodium, 15 g carb, 3 g fiber, 10 g sugars, 1 g pro.*

Glazed Ham Balls

Make-Ahead

To make Glazed Ham Balls ahead of time, prepare as directed through Step 1 *(opposite)*. Cover tightly. Prepare sauce as directed; transfer to an airtight container. Refrigerate ham balls and sauce overnight or up to 24 hours. To cook, let ham balls and sauce stand at room temperature 20 minutes. Meanwhile, preheat oven as directed. Pour sauce over ham balls and bake as directed.

Cheese balls are an admittedly retro appetizer that have been in and out of the limelight for decades. After pulling our classic rendition out of the archives, we added dried beef and dill pickles to give it even more of a throwback vibe.

Glazed Ham Balls

HANDS ON 25 minutes **BAKE** 25 minutes at 350°F

- **2 eggs, lightly beaten**
- **1½ cups soft bread crumbs**
- **½ cup finely chopped onion**
- **2 Tbsp. milk**
- **¼ tsp. black pepper**
- **2 tsp. dry mustard, divided**
- **12 oz. ground cooked ham**
- **12 oz. ground pork**
- **¾ cup packed brown sugar**
- **½ cup ketchup**
- **2 Tbsp. vinegar**

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Lightly grease a 3-qt. rectangular baking dish. In a large bowl combine the first five ingredients (through pepper); stir in 1 tsp. of the mustard. Add ham and pork; mix well. Place mixture on a cutting board and shape into a 12×8-inch rectangle. Cut the rectangle into twenty-four 2-inch squares. Roll each square into a ball. Arrange balls in prepared baking dish.

2. For sauce, in a bowl stir together the remaining 1 tsp. mustard and remaining ingredients; pour over ham balls. Bake, uncovered, until done (160°F), about 25 minutes. **Makes 24 ham balls.**

PER HAM BALL *94 cal, 4 g fat (1 g sat fat), 34 mg chol, 208 mg sodium, 10 g carb, 1 g fiber, 9 g sugars, 7 g pro.*

Dried Beef Cheese Ball

HANDS ON 15 minutes **CHILL** 4 hours

- **1 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened**
- **¼ cup sour cream**
- **2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce**
- **4 oz. smoked cheddar cheese, shredded (1 cup)**
- **½ cup chopped dill pickles**
- **1 2.25- to 2.5-oz. jar dried beef, finely chopped, divided**
- **1 Tbsp. finely chopped fresh parsley**
- **Dippers such as crackers and/or vegetables**

1. In a large bowl beat cream cheese and sour cream with a mixer on low until combined. Beat in Worcestershire sauce. Stir in cheddar cheese, dill pickles, and ¼ cup of the chopped dried beef.

2. Place mixture on a large piece of plastic wrap. Use the plastic wrap to shape mixture into a ball (mixture will be soft). Wrap plastic wrap around the ball. Chill until firm enough to handle, 4 to 24 hours. Shape into a smoother ball shape.

3. Sprinkle the remaining chopped dried beef and the parsley on a plate. Roll the cheese ball in the dried beef mixture to coat. Loosely cover and refrigerate until ready to serve with crackers and/or vegetables. **Makes 12 servings** (2 Tbsp. each).

PER SERVING *122 cal, 11 g fat (6 g sat fat), 36 mg chol, 328 mg sodium, 2 g carb, 0 g fiber, 1 g sugars, 5 g pro.*

We updated retro Green Beans Amandine by using sliced almonds instead of slivered and fresh lemon juice and zest over bottled juice.

The word "chantilly" is a vintage reference to dishes containing whipped cream (remember chantilly cake?). Whipped cream in mashed potatoes makes them oh-so-smooth and decadently rich.

Green Beans Amandine

HANDS ON 10 minutes
COOK 8 minutes

- 1½ lb. fresh French green beans (haricots verts) or regular green beans, trimmed
- 3 Tbsp. salted butter
- ½ cup sliced almonds
- 1 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- Salt and black pepper
- Lemon zest

1. Bring a 5- to 6-qt. pot of salted water to a boil. Add beans and cook, uncovered, until crisp-tender, 5 to 7 minutes. Drain beans and keep warm. Wipe out pot.
2. In the same pot melt butter over medium; stir in almonds. Cook, stirring frequently, until golden brown, 3 to 4 minutes. Remove from heat; stir in lemon juice. Add beans; toss to coat. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Transfer to a serving platter and top with lemon zest. **Makes 12 servings** (¾ cup each).
PER SERVING *65 cal, 5 g fat (2 g sat fat), 8 mg chol, 123 mg sodium, 4 g carb, 1 g fiber, 2 g sugars, 2 g pro.*

Chantilly Mashed Potato Bake

HANDS ON 20 minutes
COOK 20 minutes
BAKE 30 minutes at 400°F
STAND 10 minutes

- **4 lb. Yukon gold potatoes, peeled and cut into 1-inch cubes**
- **½ cup salted butter, divided**
- **¾ cup whole milk, warmed**
- **6 strips bacon, crisp-cooked and crumbled, divided**
- **⅔ cup thinly sliced green onions, divided**
- **1 tsp. salt**
- **½ tsp. freshly cracked black pepper**
- **1½ cups cold heavy cream**
- **½ cup shredded Parmesan cheese (2 oz.)**

1. In a 4- to 5-qt. Dutch oven cook potatoes, covered, in enough lightly salted boiling water to cover until tender, about 20 minutes. Drain well; return potatoes to pan and place over medium heat. Shake the pan lightly about 1 minute to evaporate excess water and dry potatoes. Remove from heat.

2. Meanwhile, place oven rack in the center of oven and preheat to 400°F. Use 1 Tbsp. of the butter to coat a 2½- to 3-qt. square baking dish.

3. Add the remaining butter to potatoes in pan. Mash potatoes until light and fluffy. Stir in milk, three-fourths of the bacon, ½ cup of the green onions, the salt, and pepper.

4. In a large bowl beat cream with a mixer on medium-high until stiff peaks form. Stir one-third of the whipped cream into potato mixture until fully combined, then fold in the remaining whipped cream. Transfer mixture to prepared dish. Sprinkle cheese and remaining bacon over top.

5. Bake, uncovered, until top is golden, about 30 minutes. Remove from oven; sprinkle with remaining green onions. Let stand 10 minutes before serving. **Makes 12 servings**.

PER SERVING *390 cal, 26 g fat (16 g sat fat), 75 mg chol, 536 mg sodium, 36 g carb, 4 g fiber, 4 g sugars, 8 g pro.*

Chantilly Mashed Potato Bake

Cloverleaf Potato Rolls

HANDS ON 30 minutes **RISE** 2 hours 50 minutes
REST 10 minutes **BAKE** 14 minutes at 375°F

- **4¼ to 4¾ cups all-purpose flour, divided**
- **1 pkg. active dry yeast**
- **1½ cups warm water (120°F to 130°F)**
- **½ cup mashed cooked potato (tip, *right*)**
- **⅓ cup salted butter, melted**
- **3 Tbsp. sugar**
- **1¼ tsp. salt**
- **2 Tbsp. melted salted butter, divided**

1. In a large bowl stir together 2 cups of the flour and the yeast. In a medium bowl combine next five ingredients (through salt). Add potato mixture to flour mixture. Beat with a mixer on low 30 seconds, scraping bowl constantly. Beat on high 3 minutes. Stir in as much of remaining flour as you can.

2. Turn dough out onto a lightly floured surface. Knead in enough remaining flour to make a moderately soft dough that is smooth and elastic (3 to 5 minutes). Shape dough into a ball. Place in a lightly greased bowl, turning to grease surface of dough. Cover and let rise in a warm place until double in size (2 hours).

3. Punch dough down. Turn out onto a lightly floured surface. Divide dough into 16 portions. Cover and let rest 10 minutes. Meanwhile, lightly grease sixteen 2½-inch muffin cups.

4. Divide each portion into 3 equal portions. Gently pull each piece into a ball, tucking edges under to make smooth tops. Place 3 balls into each prepared muffin cup, smooth sides up. Cover with parchment paper; let rise in a warm place until nearly double in size (about 50 minutes).

5. Preheat oven to 375°F. Brush rolls with 1 Tbsp. of the melted butter. Bake until rolls are golden and sound hollow when lightly tapped, 14 to 16 minutes. Immediately remove from pan; brush with remaining butter and cool on a wire rack. Serve warm.

Makes 16 rolls.

PER ROLL *185 cal, 6 g fat (3 g sat fat), 14 mg chol, 224 mg sodium, 30 g carb, 1 g fiber, 3 g sugars, 4 g pro.*

Mashed Potato

For ½ cup mashed potato, in a covered small saucepan cook 1 small red or russet potato, peeled and quartered, in boiling, lightly salted water until very tender, 15 to 20 minutes; drain and mash. Or use ½ cup leftover or refrigerated mashed potatoes.

Hot Buttered Rum

START TO FINISH 10 minutes

- ½ **cup salted butter, softened**
- ½ **cup powdered sugar**
- ½ **cup packed brown sugar**
- ½ **tsp. ground cinnamon**
- ¼ **tsp. freshly grated nutmeg or ground nutmeg, plus more for garnish**
- ½ **pint vanilla ice cream, softened (1 cup)**
- **Amber or clear rum**
- **Boiling water**
- **Cinnamon sticks (optional)**

1. In a medium bowl beat butter, powdered sugar, brown sugar, cinnamon, and nutmeg with a mixer on low until smooth and fluffy. Beat in the ice cream until smooth. Transfer to an airtight freezer container and freeze until ready to use, up to 3 months.

2. To serve, for each drink, place 1½ Tbsp. of the frozen base and 1½ Tbsp. rum in a coffee mug. Top with 6 oz. boiling water. Stir until base is dissolved. If you like, sprinkle with additional nutmeg and add a cinnamon stick for stirring. **Makes 18 servings** (9 oz. each).

PER SERVING *146 cal, 6 g fat (4 g sat fat), 17 mg chol, 48 mg sodium, 11 g carb, 0 g fiber, 11 g sugars, 0 g pro.*

Hot Buttered Rum

Herb-Rubbed Prime Rib

PICTURED ON *P. 62* // **HANDS ON** 15 minutes **CHILL** overnight
BAKE 20 minutes at 500°F + 1 hour at 325°F **STAND** 1 hour 15 minutes

- 2 **Tbsp. olive oil**
- 2 **tsp. black pepper**
- 1 **tsp. dried thyme, crushed**
- 1 **tsp. dried rosemary, crushed**
- 1 **tsp. salt**
- 1 **6- to 8-lb. boneless beef prime rib roast (size info, *right*)**
- 3 **large cloves garlic, thinly sliced**
- 1 **recipe Pan Sauce and/or 1 recipe Horseradish Cream *(below right)* (optional)**

1. In a small bowl combine oil, pepper, thyme, rosemary, and salt. Cut shallow slits all over meat and insert garlic slivers into slits. Spread oil mixture over the meaty parts of the roast. Cover roast loosely; chill overnight.

2. Place roast, fatty side up, on a rack set in a roasting pan. Let roast sit on counter at room temperature 1 hour. Meanwhile, preheat oven to 500°F. Insert a meat thermometer into the thickest part of the roast (without touching the pan).

3. Roast prime rib 20 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 325°F. Continue roasting 1 to 1½ hours or until thermometer registers 135°F for medium rare (145°F after standing) or 2 to 2½ hours or until thermometer reaches 150°F for medium (160°F after standing).

4. Let meat stand 15 minutes, loosely covered with foil; carve. If you like, serve with Pan Sauce and/or Horseradish Cream. **Makes 9 servings** (8 oz. each).

PER SERVING *970 cal, 81 g fat (33 g sat fat), 203 mg chol, 412 mg sodium, 1 g carb, 0 g fiber, 0 g sugars, 55 g pro.*

Pan Sauce Pour drippings from the roasting pan into a measuring cup; skim and reserve fat. If there are browned bits in the roasting pan, add 1 cup reduced-sodium beef broth to the roasting pan, place over a burner on medium, and scrape up bits with a wooden spoon. Pour into measuring cup with drippings. In a small saucepan stir together 2 Tbsp. reserved fat (or melted salted butter) and 2 Tbsp. all-purpose flour to make a roux. Cook and stir over medium until bubbly, about 1 minute. Stir in drippings and an additional 1 cup reduced-sodium beef broth. If you like, stir in 1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce. Cook and stir over medium until mixture is bubbly and coats the back of a spoon. Season to taste with salt and/or black pepper. Makes 2 cups.

PER ¼ CUP *30 cal, 3 g fat (2 g sat fat), 7 mg chol, 162 mg sodium, 2 g carb, 0 g fiber, 0 g sugars, 1 g pro.*

Horseradish Cream In a bowl combine one 8-oz. container sour cream, ¼ cup mayonnaise, 2 tsp. prepared horseradish, 2 tsp. Dijon-style mustard, and ¼ tsp. salt. Makes 1¼ cups.

PER 2 TBSP. *93 cal, 10 g fat (3 g sat fat), 17 mg chol, 142 mg sodium, 1 g carb, 0 g fiber, 0 g sugars, 1 g pro.*

Sizing Up

After initially roasting at 500°F for 20 minutes, reduce oven temperature to 325°F.

For an 8- to 10-lb. boneless roast,* double the ingredient amounts for the herb rub and use 5 cloves of garlic. Roast 1½ to 2 hours for medium rare (135°F) or 2½ to 3 hours for medium (150°F).

***NOTE These timings also work for a 9- to 10-lb. *bone-in* roast.**

Party Punch

HANDS ON 15 minutes
FREEZE overnight (Ice Ring)

- **4 cups cold water**
- **2½ cups juice blend, chilled (such as raspberry juice blend or cranberry-apple juice blend)**
- **1 12-oz. can frozen juice concentrate, thawed (such as lemonade or pineapple juice)**
- **1 to 2 cups rum, vodka, or gin (optional)**
- **1 2-liter bottle carbonated beverage, chilled (such as ginger ale or lemon-lime soda)**
- **1 cup fresh berries or sliced fruit**
- **Fresh mint (optional)**
- **Ice Ring *(below)***

1. In a large punch bowl combine the water, juice blend, frozen juice concentrate, and alcohol (if using).
2. To serve, slowly stir in carbonated beverage. Add fruit, mint (if using), and Ice Ring.
Makes 16 servings (1 cup each).
PER SERVING *117 cal, 0 g fat, 0 mg chol, 16 mg sodium, 30 g carb, 1 g fiber, 27 g sugars, 0 g pro.*

Ice Ring To a 9- or 10-inch ring mold pan or fluted tube pan add 2 to 3 cups fresh berries and desired cut-up or sliced fruit (such as kiwi, pineapple, and citrus), mint sprigs, and/or citrus peel curls. Add about 3 cups distilled or purified water to just cover the fruit. Freeze overnight or until frozen solid. To remove ice ring from pan, add warm/hot water to a large shallow dish or platter. Dip the bottom of the pan in the water just until ring loosens from pan. Invert pan to remove; transfer to the punch bowl.

Raspberry-Cranberry Gelatin Mold

HANDS ON 15 minutes **CHILL** 6 hours

- **Nonstick cooking spray**
- **3 envelopes unflavored gelatin (¼ oz. each)**
- **5 cups cranberry-raspberry juice blend or cranberry juice cocktail, divided**
- **1 6-oz. box raspberry-flavor gelatin**
- **1 cup water**
- **1½ cups fresh or frozen cranberries, chopped, divided**
- **1 6-oz. container fresh raspberries, divided**
- **1 14-oz. can sweetened condensed milk**

1. Lightly coat a 10-cup fluted tube pan with nonstick cooking spray. Place pan in freezer while preparing gelatin mixtures.
2. In a small bowl sprinkle unflavored gelatin over 1 cup of the juice. Let stand 5 minutes.
3. In a large saucepan heat remaining 4 cups juice over medium-high until simmering. Remove from heat. Whisk in raspberry-flavor gelatin and unflavored gelatin mixture until dissolved. Stir in the water.
4. Set aside 2½ cups mixture. Pour remaining juice-gelatin mixture into a large bowl. Refrigerate until mixture begins to thicken, 1 to 1½ hours. Stir in 1 cup of the cranberries and half of the raspberries. Pour mixture into prepared tube pan. Chill until set, about 1 hour.
5. Meanwhile, whisk the reserved 2½ cups juice-gelatin mixture into the sweetened condensed milk; stir in remaining cranberries and raspberries. Set aside at room temperature until the fruit-gelatin mixture that is chilling in the pan in the refrigerator is completely set. Stir the sweetened condensed milk mixture to distribute fruit. Pour evenly over fruit-gelatin layer in the pan; spread gently if necessary. Cover loosely. Chill 4 hours or overnight.
6. To unmold, dip the bottom of the pan in a bowl of warm water for about 30 seconds. invert a serving tray over pan. Invert pan and allow gelatin mold to drop onto tray. (If necessary, loosen edges with a flexible silicone spatula to help it release.) **Makes 12 servings.**

PER SERVING *254 cal, 6 g fat (3 g sat fat), 19 mg chol, 114 mg sodium, 46 g carb, 2 g fiber, 44 g sugars, 6 g pro.*

To make mushrooms, add a candy melting disc to a Kisses or Hugs milk chocolate candy. Heat just the tip of the chocolate with a lighter until barely soft and press the disc onto it. Sift with cocoa powder.

Prepare Sugared Rosemary as directed in the recipe for Candied Meyer Lemon Peel and Sugared Rosemary (*p. 84*), omitting the Meyer lemon peel. For sugared cranberries, dip cranberries in the syrup prepared for the Sugared Rosemary. Toss in granulated sugar to coat.

Ever wondered what a yule log actually is? It's a large wood log that is burned night after night during the 12 days of Christmas, a tradition that may have ancient roots in celebrating the winter solstice. People have used yule log cakes (also known as Bûche de Noël) to commemorate the holidays since the 19th century.

Chocolate Yule Log

HANDS ON 1 hour **STAND** 30 minutes **BAKE** 20 minutes at 325°F **CHILL** 30 minutes

- 6 egg yolks
- 6 egg whites
- 3 Tbsp. all-purpose flour
- 3 Tbsp. unsweetened Dutch-process cocoa powder
- 1 tsp. instant espresso powder
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- ¼ tsp. salt
- 1¼ cups powdered sugar
- 1 recipe Cocoa Cream *(right)*
- 1 recipe Chocolate 'Bark' *(below right)*

1. Allow egg yolks and egg whites to stand at room temperature 30 minutes. Meanwhile, lightly grease a 15×10-inch baking pan. Line bottom of pan with waxed paper or parchment paper; grease paper. In a small bowl combine flour, cocoa powder, and espresso powder.
2. Preheat oven to 325°F. In a medium bowl beat egg yolks, vanilla, and salt with a mixer on high until thick and lemon color, about 5 minutes. Gradually add powdered sugar, beating until combined.
3. Thoroughly wash beaters with hot, soapy water. In a large clean bowl beat egg whites on medium until stiff peaks form (tips stand straight). Fold about one-fourth of the beaten egg whites into the egg yolk mixture; fold egg yolk mixture into the remaining beaten egg whites. Evenly sprinkle the flour mixture over egg mixture; fold in gently just until combined. Spread batter evenly in the prepared baking pan.
4. Bake until top springs back when lightly touched, 20 to 25 minutes. Immediately loosen edges of cake from pan and turn cake out onto a clean kitchen towel sprinkled with additional powdered sugar. Carefully remove paper. Starting from a short side of the cake, roll the warm cake with the towel into a spiral. Cool completely on a wire rack.
5. To fill, unroll cake roll. Spread with half of the Cocoa Cream (2½ cups) to within 1 inch of the outside edges. Roll up cake without towel. Place roll, seam side down, on a serving platter; cover with plastic wrap and chill at least 30 minutes.
6. Frost the entire cake with remaining Cocoa Cream. Use a serrated knife to diagonally cut a 2- to 3-inch slice off one end of cake. Place the diagonally cut edge of piece against the side of longer roll on the serving plate. This forms a "branch" on the "log." (Use the frosting to connect the branch to the log.)
7. Decorate with Chocolate 'Bark' and, if you like, sift with additional powdered sugar. Store in refrigerator. **Makes 12 servings** (1 slice each).
PER SERVING *422 cal, 26 g fat (15 g sat fat), 158 mg chol, 156 mg sodium, 43 g carb, 0 g fiber, 37 g sugars, 7 g pro.*

Cocoa Cream For filling, in a large bowl beat 8 oz. softened cream cheese, 2 cups powdered sugar, and ¼ cup unsweetened Dutch-process cocoa powder with a mixer on medium, stopping to scrape down sides as needed, until smooth and creamy, about 1 minute. Gradually add 2 cups heavy cream, beating on medium until mixture is slightly thickened, 1 to 2 minutes. Add 2 tsp. vanilla. Beat on high until stiff peaks form, about 2 minutes.

Chocolate 'Bark'
Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. In a small saucepan cook and stir ½ to ⅔ cup chopped milk chocolate or semisweet chocolate (3 to 4 oz.) over low until melted. Remove from heat. Spread melted chocolate in a thin layer (about a 9×14-inch rectangle) on the prepared baking sheet. Let stand until set (if necessary, chill until set). For shards, use a sharp knife to cut chocolate into 1-inch slightly irregular strips.

we're nuts about BRITTLE

Think outside the peanut box for this favorite holiday candy. We updated our classic recipe with options for cashews, almonds, and pepitas—plus our Test Kitchen's top tips for success. Time to get crackin'.

Nut Brittle

HANDS ON 20 minutes
COOK 45 minutes

- **2 cups sugar**
- **1 cup light-color corn syrup**
- **½ cup water**
- **¼ cup salted butter, plus more for pans**
- **2½ cups raw peanuts, raw cashews, whole blanched almonds, and/or raw pepitas (pumpkin seeds)**
- **1½ tsp. baking soda, sifted**

1. Calibrate your candy thermometer (tip, *below right*). Butter two large baking sheets. Butter the sides of a 3-qt. heavy saucepan. In the saucepan combine sugar, corn syrup, the water, and ¼ cup butter. Cook and stir over medium-high until butter is melted and sugar is dissolved. Continue cooking until mixture boils, stirring occasionally. Clip candy thermometer to side of pan. Reduce heat to medium-low. Continue cooking, stirring occasionally, until thermometer registers 275°F, 30 minutes. Adjust heat as necessary to maintain a steady boil.
2. Stir in nuts. Cook over medium-low, stirring often, until thermometer registers 295°F, about 15 minutes more.
3. Remove from heat; remove thermometer. Quickly sprinkle baking soda over nut mixture, stirring constantly. Immediately pour onto prepared baking sheets. Let cool 1 minute. Use two forks to lift and pull candy into an even layer. Cool candy completely; break into pieces. Store in an airtight container at room temperature up to 1 week.
Makes about 2 lb. (about 48 pieces).
PER PIECE *105 cal, 5 g fat (1 g sat fat), 3 mg chol, 53 mg sodium, 15 g carb, 1 g fiber, 14 g sugars, 2 g pro.*

Brittle Success

Use the right pan

Choose a heavy-bottom saucepan for even heating and caramelizing. It's important to use the pan size specified in the recipe because the candy mixture will expand during cooking. If the pan is too small, the mixture may boil over or take too long to cook; if it's too big, it may cook too quickly.

Measure accurately

Measure ingredients before you begin and have a candy thermometer ready. Make one batch at a time; do not halve or double the recipe.

Rely on a thermometer

A candy thermometer is key for candymaking success. Reaching exact temperatures creates the ideal consistency for pulling. The finished brittle will snap versus having a chewy texture that can stick to your teeth. Choose a thermometer that's easy to read and clips to the side of the pan.

Calibrate

Before you start, calibrate your thermometer for accuracy. Submerge the tip in rapidly boiling water; it should reach 212°F (the temperature at which water boils). If it doesn't, add or subtract the number of degrees above or below 212°F from the temperature called for in the recipe.

American PIE

Coast to coast, we are a pie-loving people—and never more ardently than during the holidays. We took a tour through community cookbooks and explored local ingredients to find inspiration for new takes on regional specialties. Hop in for our road trip in pie form.

Chocolate Mousse Pie with Pumpkin-Sesame Brittle

HANDS ON 50 minutes **BAKE** 13 minutes at 350°F + 10 minutes at 325°F **CHILL** 3 hours

We dreamed up a pie that's sweet and spicy to honor the Southwest's deep cultural connections to Mexico. The richly flavored chocolate mousse filling is spiked with warming spices like cinnamon and cayenne, and both the crust and the brittle topping feature crunchy pumpkin seeds.

Spicy Whipped Cream
- ½ oz. (2-inch piece) fresh ginger, peeled and sliced
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 2 Tbsp. packed dark brown sugar
- ¼ tsp. ground ginger
- Generous pinch cayenne pepper

Pumpkin-Sesame Brittle
- ¾ cup pepitas (pumpkin seeds)
- ¼ cup sesame seeds
- ¼ cup honey
- ¼ cup dark corn syrup
- Sea salt flakes

Ginger Cookie Crust
- ½ cup pepitas (pumpkin seeds)
- 1 cup gingersnap crumbs (sixteen 2-inch cookies)
- ¼ tsp. ground ginger
- Pinch cayenne pepper
- ¼ cup unsalted butter, melted

Spiced Chocolate Filling
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1 tsp. ground ginger
- 1 tsp. instant espresso powder
- ¾ tsp. ground cinnamon
- ¼ tsp. cayenne pepper
- 3 eggs
- ¾ cup granulated sugar
- 8 oz. bittersweet chocolate, melted and cooled to room temperature
- 1½ tsp. vanilla
- 4 Tbsp. salted butter, cut into ½-inch cubes, room temperature

To assemble
- Grated chocolate (optional)

1. For Spicy Whipped Cream, add fresh ginger to heavy cream; cover and refrigerate several hours or overnight.

2. For Pumpkin-Sesame Brittle, preheat oven to 350°F. Line a 15×10-inch baking pan with foil and coat with *nonstick cooking spray.* In a medium bowl combine pepitas and sesame seeds.

3. In a small saucepan combine honey and corn syrup. Heat over low just until mixture is melted. Pour over the seeds. Using a rubber spatula, turn the mixture into the prepared pan, spreading it into a single layer. Bake until evenly browned, 13 to 15 minutes. Sprinkle with sea salt flakes. Let brittle cool completely, then break into large shards.

4. For Ginger Cookie Crust, in a small skillet toast pepitas over medium, stirring to prevent burning, just until you hear popping sounds and seeds are lightly golden, 3 to 5 minutes. Remove from heat, transfer to a plate, and let cool.

5. In a food processor combine cooled pepitas, gingersnap crumbs, ginger, cayenne pepper, and ⅛ tsp. *kosher salt*; process until finely crushed.

6. Transfer gingersnap mixture to a medium bowl. Add melted butter, tossing with a fork until mixture holds together when pinched. Press mixture over the bottom and up sides of a 9-inch pie plate. Chill 10 minutes. Preheat oven to 325°F. Bake crust just until lightly brown, 10 minutes. Cool completely.

7. For Spiced Chocolate Filling, in a large bowl combine heavy cream, ginger, instant espresso powder, cinnamon, and cayenne pepper. Beat with a mixer on medium until thick, then increase to high and beat until stiff peaks form (tips stand straight). Cover and chill.

8. In a medium heatproof bowl set over a medium saucepan of barely simmering water, whisk together eggs, granulated sugar, and 2 Tbsp. *water.* Beat with a mixer on low to medium until mixture registers 160°F, 8 to 10 minutes.

9. Transfer mixture to a large bowl. Beat with mixer on medium to high until thick and cooled to room temperature, 8 minutes. Beat in chocolate and vanilla. Scrape down bowl with a rubber spatula. Stir in butter, a few cubes at a time, until incorporated. Remove whipped cream from refrigerator. Using a rubber spatula, fold in whipped cream in three additions until no streaks remain. Spoon into pie shell, spreading to smooth. Cover with plastic wrap pressed directly on surface. Chill 3 to 24 hours.

10. To finish Spicy Whipped Cream, pour cream through a fine-mesh sieve into a medium bowl; discard ginger. Add brown sugar, ground ginger, and cayenne pepper to cream. Beat with a mixer on medium to high until soft peaks form (tips curl). Top pie with whipped cream and, if you like, sprinkle with grated chocolate. Serve pie with brittle.

Makes 10 servings.

PER SERVING *668 cal, 46 g fat (25 g sat fat), 134 mg chol, 174 mg sodium, 55 g carb, 6 g fiber, 42 g sugars, 13 g pro.*

Recipes by Ellen Gray; Text by Emily Teel

Colossal Coconut Custard Pie

HANDS ON 1 hour **BAKE** 5 minutes at 325°F + 14 minutes at 450°F **CHILL** 2 hours

Coconut Crust

- ¾ cup sweetened flake coconut
- 1½ cups all-purpose flour
- ¼ cup shortening
- ¼ cup cold unsalted butter, cut into 1-inch cubes
- ¼ to ⅓ cup ice water

Chewy Coconut Layer

- 1 cup sweetened flake coconut
- ½ cup sugar
- ¼ cup light corn syrup
- ½ tsp. vanilla

Coconut Custard

- ¾ cup sugar
- ¼ cup cornstarch
- 1 13.5-oz. can full-fat unsweetened coconut milk
- 4 egg yolks (reserve whites for meringue)
- 1½ tsp. vanilla
- ½ cup sweetened flake coconut

Meringue

- 4 egg whites (reserved from eggs used for custard), room temperature
- ½ tsp. cream of tartar
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- Toasted coconut chips (optional)

1. For Coconut Crust, preheat oven to 325°F. Spread ¾ cup sweetened coconut in an even layer on a baking sheet. Bake just until fragrant and lightly golden, 5 to 7 minutes; let cool. Reserve ¼ cup for the Chewy Coconut Layer and ¼ cup to top the Meringue.

2. Increase oven temperature to 450°F. In a medium bowl stir together flour, the remaining ¼ cup toasted coconut, and ¼ tsp. *salt.* Using a pastry cutter, cut in shortening and butter until pieces are pea size. Add ice water, 1 Tbsp. at a time, tossing with a fork until mixture begins to come together. Gather dough, kneading gently until it holds together. Shape into a disk.

3. On a lightly floured surface roll dough into a 12-inch circle. Wrap dough around rolling pin and transfer to a 9-inch pie plate. Take care not to stretch dough. Press into pie plate and trim circle ½ inch beyond the edge of pie plate. Fold under extra pastry even with the plate edge; crimp edge. Use a fork to prick bottom and sides of crust.

4. Line crust with a double thickness of foil. Bake 8 minutes; remove foil. Bake until golden, 6 to 8 minutes more. Cool pie shell on a wire rack.

5. For Chewy Coconut Layer, in a medium bowl combine 1 cup sweetened coconut and reserved ¼ cup toasted coconut. In a heavy 1-qt. saucepan heat sugar and 2 Tbsp. *water* over medium just until sugar dissolves (do not simmer). Remove from heat. Stir syrup, vanilla, and ⅛ tsp. salt into coconut. Fold in sugar mixture using a rubber spatula. Using an offset spatula, spread coconut mixture in pie shell.

6. For Coconut Custard, in a medium saucepan stir together sugar, cornstarch, and ⅛ tsp. kosher salt. Gradually stir in coconut milk. Cook and stir over medium-high until thickened and bubbly. Place egg yolks in a bowl. Gradually stir ¼ cup hot mixture into egg yolks; add egg mixture to saucepan. Bring to a gentle boil, stirring constantly; reduce heat. Cook and stir 2 minutes more; remove from heat. Whisk in vanilla. Stir in ½ cup sweetened coconut. Pour custard into shell; spread evenly. Cover with plastic wrap pressed directly on custard. Chill at least 2 hours or up to 2 days before topping with meringue.

7. For Meringue, in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a whisk attachment, combine egg whites and cream of tartar. Whisk on medium just until soft peaks form (tips curl). In a heavy 1-qt. saucepan combine sugar and ½ cup water. Cook over medium-high, stirring until sugar dissolves and mixture reaches 240°F. With mixer on low, carefully and slowly pour hot sugar syrup over egg whites, gradually increasing speed to high until stiff peaks form (tips stand straight). Beat in vanilla. Meringue should be glossy and very thick.

8. Spread or pipe meringue over filling, completely covering filling and drawing meringue to edge of crust. If you like, use a kitchen torch to brown the meringue. Sprinkle meringue with remaining ¼ cup toasted coconut and, if you like, toasted coconut chips. Cut pie into wedges using a sharp knife dipped in hot water for clean slices.

Makes 8 servings.

PER SERVING *717 cal, 33 g fat (22 g sat fat), 107 mg chol, 271 mg sodium, 100 g carb, 3 g fiber, 68 g sugars, 7 g pro.*

This coconut dream of a pie is best the day it's topped with meringue, but you can make it through Step 6 up to 2 days ahead, then top with meringue to serve.

Colossal Coconut Custard Pie

The tropical flavor and heady aroma of coconut inspired this three-layer pie. Originally brought to Hawaii by Polynesian travelers, coconuts thrive in the islands' volcanic soil. In an effort to build the ultimate coconut pie, we lined a toasted coconut crust with chewy coconut caramel. Tender and creamy coconut milk custard fills the base, while meringue and curls of coconut chips crown this showstopper.

Sour cream addition

Adding sour cream to the whipped cream is a nod to the classic Southern pairing of bananas and sour cream; it also helps stabilize the cream.

Brûlée trick

Traditionally, bananas Foster is cooked in caramel then set aflame with rum. We get the caramelized effect with a kitchen torch or a quick 2 minutes under a broiler right before serving.

Bananas Foster Cream Pie

Pie in the South is practically a religion, and we hate to play favorites. Instead, we drew on several beloved banana desserts to invent a pie destined to be a new classic. We started with New Orleans' famous bananas Foster, then riffed on homemade banana pudding for the cookie crust and layers of sliced banana and a brown sugar cream filling.

Bananas Foster Cream Pie

HANDS ON 1 hour **CHILL** 2 hours 15 minutes **BAKE** 10 minutes at 325°F

Pecan Cookie Crust

- 2 cups pecan shortbread cookie crumbs (about 20 cookies)
- 4 Tbsp. unsalted butter, melted

Bananas Foster Sauce

- 4 Tbsp. unsalted butter
- ¼ cup packed dark brown sugar
- ¼ tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1½ Tbsp. dark rum
- 1 tsp. heavy cream

Brown Sugar Pastry Cream

- ⅔ cup granulated sugar
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour
- ¼ cup cornstarch
- 8 large egg yolks
- 2⅔ cups whole milk, heated until steaming
- ⅔ cup packed dark brown sugar
- 2 tsp. vanilla

To assemble

- 2 just-ripe/firm bananas, peeled, diagonally sliced ¼ inch thick, and lightly brushed with fresh lemon juice (tip, *below right*)

Rum Whipped Cream

- ¾ cup heavy cream
- ¼ cup sour cream
- 1 Tbsp. powdered sugar
- 2 tsp. dark rum
- ⅛ tsp. vanilla

Brûléed Bananas

- 2 just-ripe/firm bananas, peeled, halved crosswise, then halved lengthwise
- ¼ cup granulated sugar

1. For Pecan Cookie Crust, in a medium bowl stir together crumbs and ¼ tsp. *salt.* Stir in melted butter. The mixture should hold together when pinched. Press mixture over the bottom and up sides of 9-inch pie plate; chill 15 minutes. Preheat oven to 325°F. Bake crust until golden, 10 to 12 minutes. Don't overbake. Crust will feel soft but will continue to firm up as it cools. Cool completely.

2. For Bananas Foster Sauce, in a heavy 1-qt. saucepan combine butter, brown sugar, cinnamon, and a generous pinch of salt. Cook over medium-low until bubbly around edge, about 5 minutes. Whisk in rum and cream; cook until slightly thickened, 1 to 2 minutes more. Transfer to a heat-resistant bowl. Reserve ¼ cup for pastry cream.

3. For Brown Sugar Pastry Cream, in a bowl stir together granulated sugar, flour, and cornstarch. Add egg yolks. Beat with a mixer on medium until thick and pale yellow, about 5 minutes. In a large saucepan combine milk and brown sugar; bring to a simmer over medium-high. Remove from heat and pour ¼ cup of the hot milk mixture into the egg mixture. Beat on low to combine. Pour the remaining milk mixture into egg mixture, beating to combine. Pour custard mixture into saucepan. Cook over medium-low, whisking and scraping sides of pan constantly, until thickened and bubbly, 10 to 12 minutes. Cook and stir until mixture reaches a pudding-like consistency, 2 minutes more. Remove from heat. Stir in vanilla and the reserved ¼ cup sauce. Strain cream mixture through a fine-mesh sieve into a heat-resistant bowl.

4. To assemble, using a small spatula, spread a ¼-inch-thick layer of pastry cream over the bottom of piecrust. Arrange half of the diagonal banana slices over pastry cream. Top with half of the remaining pastry cream, spreading evenly. Top with the remaining banana slices. Spread the remaining pastry cream over top. Cover with plastic wrap pressed directly on surface of the pastry cream. Chill pie at least 2 hours before serving. Cover and chill sauce until ready to serve.

5. For Rum Whipped Cream, in a chilled medium bowl combine heavy cream, sour cream, and powdered sugar. Beat with a mixer on medium until thickened. Add rum and vanilla. Beat until stiff peaks form (tips stand straight). Take care not to overbeat. Cover and chill until ready to serve.

6. For Brûléed Bananas, line a baking sheet with foil. Arrange banana quarters flat side up on prepared baking sheet. Sprinkle a thin, even layer of granulated sugar (1½ tsp. per piece) on bananas. Use a kitchen torch to caramelize the sugar. (Or place under the broiler 4 to 5 inches from heat until sugar melts and starts to bubble, 2 minutes.)

7. Spread whipped cream over pie. Arrange Brûléed Bananas around edge. Drizzle some sauce over top. Serve additional sauce on the side. **Makes 8 servings.**

PER SERVING *742 cal, 38 g fat (19 g sat fat), 263 mg chol, 190 mg sodium, 92 g carb, 2 g fiber, 67 g sugars, 9 g pro.*

No brown bananas

Just-ripe/firm bananas are best for layering, and a quick brush with fresh lemon juice will inhibit browning.

Winter GREEN

In the spirit of the evergreen season, we're channeling those piney tree notes onto our plates with aromatic rosemary.

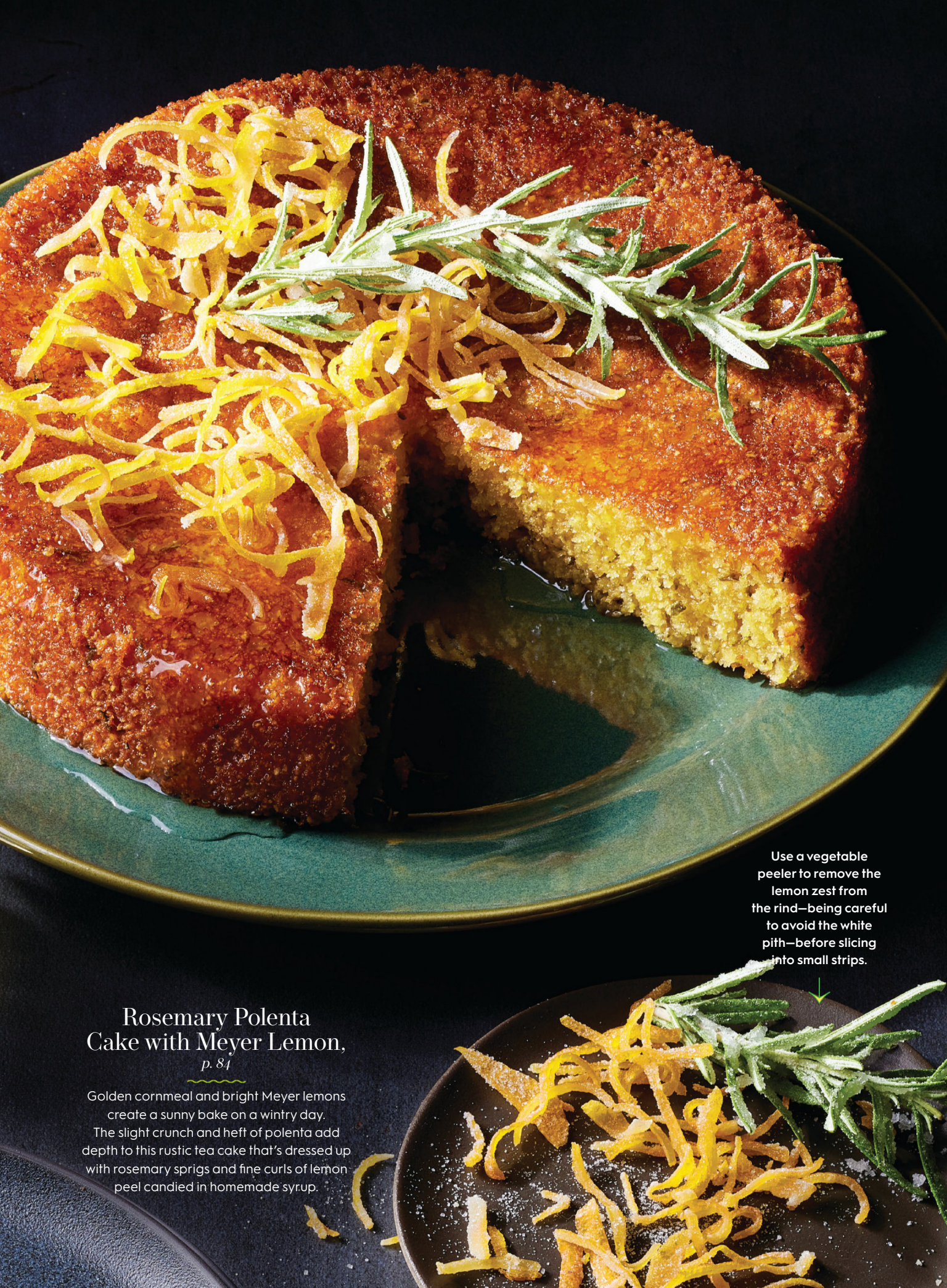
Potato-Rosemary Upside-Down Tartlets,

p. 84

These impressive appetizers are a marriage between Italian pizza con patate and the upside-down puff pastry trend that recently swept social media. Rosemary and thinly sliced potatoes bake under a blanket of flaky pastry.

Make paper-thin slices of red potatoes using a mandoline. Arrange in a flower pattern for the prettiest results.

By Anna Kovel



Use a vegetable peeler to remove the lemon zest from the rind—being careful to avoid the white pith—before slicing into small strips.

Rosemary Polenta Cake with Meyer Lemon,

p. 84

Golden cornmeal and bright Meyer lemons create a sunny bake on a wintry day. The slight crunch and heft of polenta add depth to this rustic tea cake that's dressed up with rosemary sprigs and fine curls of lemon peel candied in homemade syrup.

Tips for Success

Thawing

Puff pastry is sold as frozen folded sheets. To thaw the pastry before use, let it stand in the refrigerator overnight. Do not refreeze thawed pastry.

All-Butter Puff Pastry

These directions *(right)* are for the Pepperidge Farm 17.3-oz. pkg. of puff pastry available at most supermarkets. If using a 14-oz. pkg. all-butter puff pastry (such as Dufour), cut the 14×10-inch sheet of dough in half to create two 10×7-inch rectangles. Reserve one rectangle for another use. Roll half the dough into a 10×8-inch rectangle; cut into nine rectangles (3⅓×2⅔ inches each). Assemble and bake as directed.

Pastry Spacing

When testing, we got the best results leaving about 4 inches between the pastries. This allowed them to bake evenly and puff nicely.

Potato-Rosemary Upside-Down Tartlets

PICTURED ON *P. 82.*
HANDS ON 30 minutes
BAKE 15 minutes at 400°F

- **5 to 6 oz. baby red potatoes, scrubbed**
- **2 Tbsp. coarsely chopped fresh rosemary, plus 9 delicate tops**
- **Extra virgin olive oil**
- **Salt and black pepper**
- **⅓ cup grated Parmesan cheese (on the medium holes of a grater)**
- **½ of a 17.3-oz. pkg. frozen puff pastry sheets (1 sheet), thawed**
- **1 egg, lightly beaten**

1. Preheat oven to 400°F. Line a 15×10-inch baking pan with parchment paper or a silicone baking mat. Use a mandoline or a thin-bladed long knife to cut potatoes into paper-thin slices; transfer to a bowl. Toss with the chopped rosemary, 2 tsp. olive oil, and ½ tsp. each salt and pepper.
2. Drizzle about 1 tsp. olive oil on the parchment in pan in nine areas (about 4 inches between them; tip, *below left*). Place the rosemary tops on the oil. Arrange five or six potato slices on top of the rosemary in a spiral shape, overlapping slightly. Sprinkle Parmesan on top, covering potatoes and some of the area around them.
3. Unfold puff pastry; cut into nine squares. Lay a pastry piece directly on top of each pile of potatoes. Add a splash of *water* to the egg; beat with a fork. Brush pastry with egg wash.
4. Bake until puffed and deep golden brown, about 15 minutes, rotating pans in oven halfway through baking. Lift each tartlet with a spatula and flip to turn potato side up; let cool slightly on a wire rack before serving.
Makes 9 tartlets.
PER PASTRY *184 cal, 13 g fat (5 g sat fat), 13 mg chol, 282 mg sodium, 14 g carb, 1 g fiber, 1 g sugars, 3 g pro.*

Rosemary Polenta Cake with Meyer Lemon

PICTURED ON *P. 83.*
HANDS ON 45 minutes
BAKE 40 minutes at 350°F
COOL 5 minutes

- **1 cup polenta or cornmeal**
- **½ cup all-purpose flour**
- **2 Tbsp. finely chopped fresh rosemary**
- **1¼ tsp. baking powder**
- **½ tsp. baking soda**
- **½ tsp. salt**
- **2 sticks unsalted butter, softened**
- **¾ cup sugar**
- **4 eggs**
- **¼ cup plain whole milk yogurt**
- **¼ cup chopped Candied Meyer Lemon Peel *(right)* Sugared Rosemary (*right*) (optional)**
- **½ cup syrup (from Candied Meyer Lemon Peel, *right*)**

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Butter and flour a 9-inch square cake pan or 9×5-inch loaf pan.
2. In a medium bowl combine polenta, flour, rosemary, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. In a large bowl beat butter with a mixer on medium-high 30 seconds. Gradually add sugar; beat until fluffy, about 2 minutes. Add eggs, one at a time, beating after each addition. Reduce speed to low; beat in half of the polenta mixture. Add yogurt; beat until just combined. Stir remaining polenta mixture and chopped Candied Meyer Lemon Peel into batter. Spoon batter into prepared pan, spreading evenly (batter will be thick).
3. Bake until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean, 40 to 45 minutes. Cool in pan on a wire rack 5 minutes. Run a knife around the edge to release the cake from the pan. Invert onto a serving platter. Top with Sugared Rosemary (if using) and additional candied lemon peel. Serve cake warm with drizzled lemon syrup from Candied Meyer Lemon Peel.
Makes 8 servings.
PER SERVING *489 cal, 27 g fat (16 g sat fat), 157 mg chol, 342 mg sodium, 58 g carb, 1 g fiber, 35 g sugars, 6 g pro.*

Candied Meyer Lemon Peel and Sugared Rosemary

HANDS ON 45 minutes
COOK 15 minutes

- **3 Meyer lemons**
- **1½ cups plus 1 Tbsp. sugar, divided**
- **3 or 4 sprigs fresh rosemary**

1. Peel lemons with a vegetable peeler (reserve peeled lemons for another use). Using a sharp knife, very finely slice the strips. Place in a small, nonreactive saucepan; cover with 2 inches *water*. Bring to boiling; reduce heat to medium. Cook, uncovered, 5 minutes. Strain and rinse with fresh water.
2. Combine the 1½ cups sugar and ¾ cup water in the saucepan. Bring to boiling, stirring to dissolve sugar. Add the lemon peel to the syrup. Reduce heat to medium-low. Stir to coat peel with syrup; cook until translucent, 10 to 15 minutes. Strain peel from syrup, reserving syrup. Chop enough of the lemon strips to make ¼ cup to use in the cake.
3. Place remaining 1 Tbsp. sugar on a plate. Dip rosemary sprigs into syrup with a slotted spoon, allowing excess to drip off. Toss sprigs in sugar to coat. Set aside on a clean plate to dry while you make the cake. Coat lemon peel in remaining sugar. Let dry on plate with rosemary.
4. Serve syrup with cake. Store remaining syrup in the refrigerator up to 2 weeks. Use syrup to sweeten tea, drizzle over fruit, or add to cocktails. Makes 1¼ cups syrup and ½ cup candied lemon peel.

Festive Sipper

The herb-citrus syrup and piney, speckled salt are DIY touches that make this cocktail a standout on the holiday drink menu.

Rosemary-Mezcal Salty Dogs

START TO FINISH
20 minutes

This wintry take on the summery salty dog features woodsy rosemary and smoky mezcal in place of the usual gin. Garnish each glass with a rosemary-salt rim and a sprig for a stirring stick.

1 MAKE ROSEMARY-GRAPEFRUIT SYRUP
Combine ½ cup **sugar,** 2 sprigs **fresh rosemary,** 4 strips **grapefruit peel,** and 1 cup **water** in a small saucepan. Bring to a boil and cook until sugar is completely dissolved, about 2 minutes. Remove from heat and cool to room temperature. Strain through a fine-mesh sieve into a jar. Refrigerate, covered, until ready to use. Store up to 1 month.

2 RIM THE GLASS WITH ROSEMARY SALT
Stir together 2 tsp. finely chopped **fresh rosemary** and 2 Tbsp. **sea salt flakes** in a small bowl. Press firmly with the back of a spoon to lightly crush the salt and release the rosemary's fragrance (or use a mortar and pestle). Run a **grapefruit wedge** along the rim of a cocktail glass. Gently roll the glass rim in the salt mixture.

LEFTOVER SALT Sprinkle the herb-scented salt on potatoes, eggs, or roasted chicken or pork. You can also mix it with some olive oil and use it as a bread dipper.

3 CRAFT THE COCKTAIL
In a cocktail shaker with ice, add 1½ oz. **mezcal** or **tequila,** ½ oz. **Rosemary Grapefruit Syrup,** and 2½ oz. **grapefruit juice.** Shake well and pour into rimmed glasses filled with ice. Garnish with grapefruit wedge and rosemary sprig.

PER COCKTAIL *149 cal, 0 g fat, 0 mg chol, 465 mg sodium, 0 g carb, 0 g fiber, 12 g sugars, 0 g pro.*

Rosemary Pecan Brittle

Flecks of bright green leaves show through this blond nut brittle. A little bit savory and a little bit sweet, it will do nicely as part of a holiday nibbles spread. Pair with olives, dried apricots, assorted crackers, roasted chickpeas, salami, and a nutty cheese such as aged Gouda, Gruyère, or Manchego.

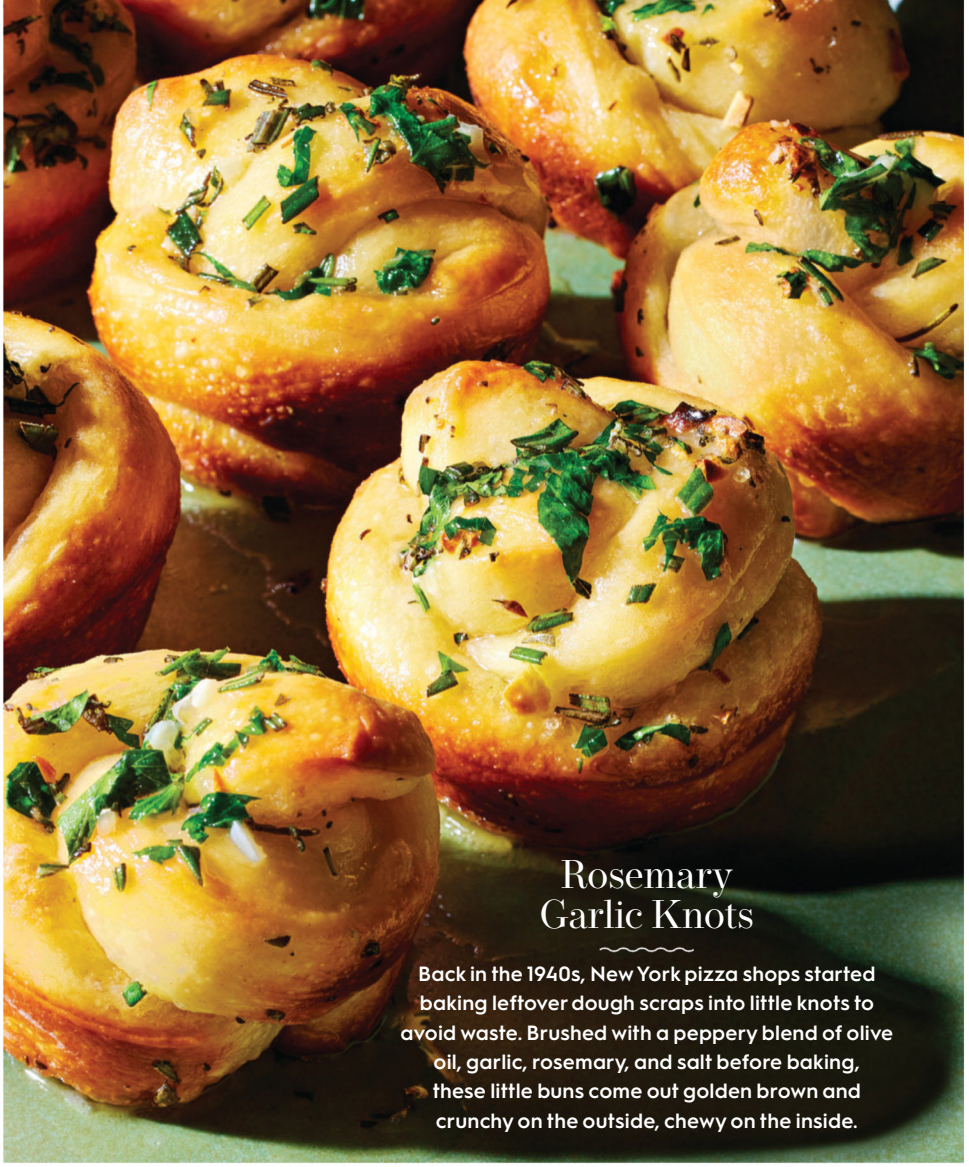
Give the brittle a holiday shimmer by sprinkling with large flaked salt like Maldon or fleur de sel.

Rosemary Pecan Brittle

HANDS ON 30 minutes
BAKE 6 minutes at 375°F
COOL 1 hour 30 minutes
COOK 8 minutes

- 1½ cups pecan halves
- Vegetable oil
- ½ cup sugar
- ½ cup light-color corn syrup
- 2 Tbsp. chopped fresh rosemary
- ½ tsp. baking soda
- Sea salt flakes

1. Preheat oven to 375°F. Spread pecans in a single layer on a baking sheet; bake until toasted and fragrant, about 6 minutes. Transfer sheet to a cooling rack; cool until room temperature, about 30 minutes. Coarsely chop about half of the pecans; transfer all the pecans to a bowl. Brush the baking sheet and two forks with oil; place near the stove top.
2. In a medium saucepan combine sugar, corn syrup, and 2 Tbsp. *water;* stir to combine. Bring to barely boiling (bubbles are just breaking the surface, not rolling or vigorous). Continue cooking until light golden in color, about 8 minutes. (If using a thermometer, it should read 300°F.) Stir in pecans and rosemary with a wooden spoon, working quickly to coat all the pecans with syrup. Remove from heat; stir in baking soda. Immediately pour the mixture onto the oiled baking sheet, quickly spreading into an even layer by pulling with the oiled forks (mixture cools quickly). Immediately sprinkle surface with salt; let cool to room temperature, about 1 hour. Tap with a knife to crack into large pieces. Store in an airtight container at room temperature up to 1 month.
Makes 16 (2- to 3-inch) pieces.
PER PIECE *126 cal, 8 g fat (1 g sat fat), 0 mg chol, 156 mg sodium, 15 g carb, 1 g fiber, 9 g sugars, 1 g pro.*



Rosemary Garlic Knots

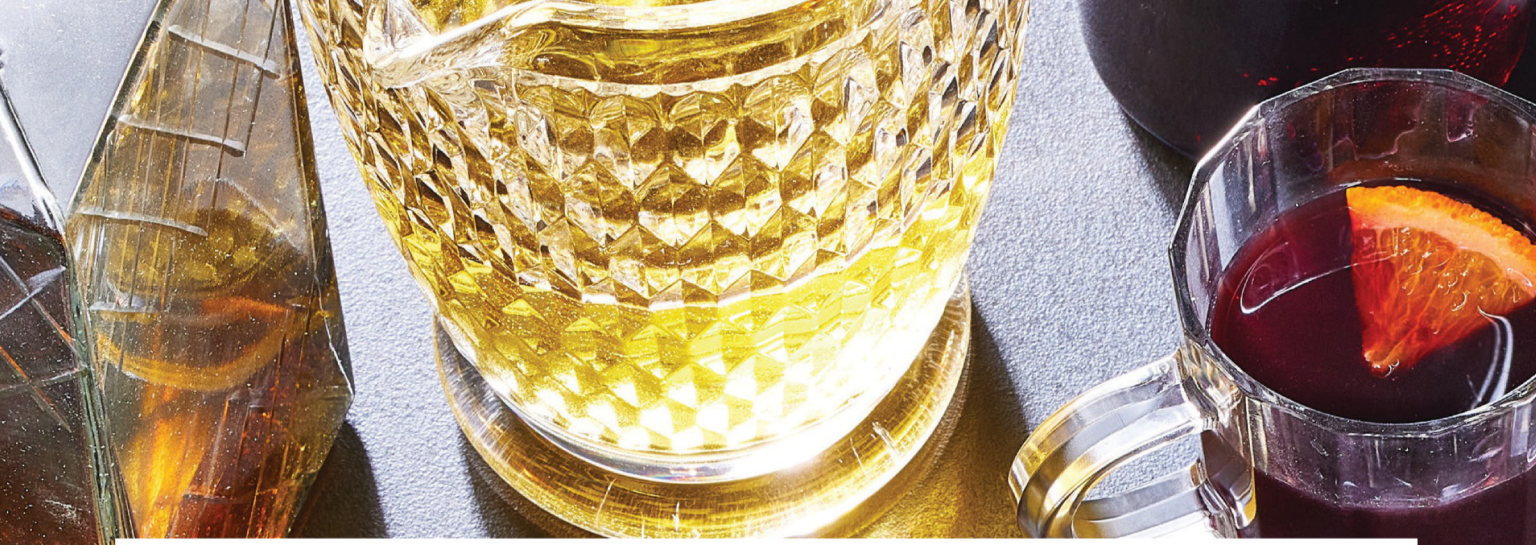
Back in the 1940s, New York pizza shops started baking leftover dough scraps into little knots to avoid waste. Brushed with a peppery blend of olive oil, garlic, rosemary, and salt before baking, these little buns come out golden brown and crunchy on the outside, chewy on the inside.

Rosemary Garlic Knots

If you'd prefer breadsticks, skip shaping the dough strips into knots. Brush with the rosemary mixture and bake 8 to 10 minutes.
HANDS ON 20 minutes **RISE** 20 minutes **BAKE** 17 minutes at 425°F **COOL** 2 minutes

- 1 lb. pizza dough, at room temperature
- Olive oil
- 1 Tbsp. plus 1 tsp. chopped fresh rosemary, divided
- 3 cloves garlic, minced, divided
- ¼ tsp. coarse salt
- ¼ cup salted butter, melted
- 1 Tbsp. chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

1. Preheat oven to 425°F with a rack in the upper third of the oven. Place dough on a large cutting board; gently roll into a 12×5-inch rectangle, allowing dough to rest as needed. Cover with a towel. Brush twelve 2½-inch muffin cups generously with olive oil.
2. In a small bowl combine the 1 Tbsp. rosemary, two cloves of the garlic, 2 Tbsp. olive oil, and the coarse salt. Brush rosemary mixture on the surface of the dough, spreading to the edges.
3. Cut dough crosswise into 12 strips. Gently pull both ends of each strip, then wrap around two fingers twice, creating a donut shape. Tuck end of the dough into center hole, forming a loose knot.
4. Place each knot in a prepared muffin cup. Cover muffin pan with a kitchen towel. Let dough rise in a warm place until slightly puffed, 20 to 30 minutes. Gently brush the top of each knot with olive oil. Bake until golden brown and not doughy in the center, 17 to 20 minutes. Cool slightly before removing from pan, about 2 minutes.
5. Meanwhile, for garlic-rosemary butter, in a small bowl combine butter, the remaining one clove garlic and 1 tsp. rosemary, and the parsley. Drizzle butter mixture over knots. Serve warm. **Makes 12 knots.**
PER KNOT *165 cal, 9 g fat (3 g sat fat), 10 mg chol, 259 mg sodium, 17 g carb, 0 g fiber, 0 g sugars, 3 g pro.*



WINTER WARM-UP!

Mulled Wine

Start your holiday get-togethers with a steamy potful of mulled wine. Juicy or brandy-spiked, sugared or honeyed, and spiced just to your liking, our flexible recipe adapts to any taste or pantry.

Customizable Mulled Red Wine

HANDS ON 15 minutes **COOK** 30 minutes

- 1 **750-ml bottle red wine**
- ¼ **cup Sweetener (options, *right*)**
- 1 **orange**
- **Whole Spices (options, *right*)**
- ½ **cup brandy (optional)**
- 2 **cups cranberry juice cocktail or apple cider (optional)**
- **Garnishes (options, *right*) (optional)**

1. In a large saucepan combine wine and desired Sweetener. Use a vegetable peeler to remove zest from orange in wide strips; add to pan. Halve the orange and squeeze the juice into the pan. Add desired Whole Spices. If using, stir in brandy and cranberry juice cocktail or apple cider.

2. Bring mixture to a gentle simmer (do not boil). Reduce heat to low. Simmer, covered, 30 to 60 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, remove and discard zest and spices. If you like, add Garnishes to servings. (If you like, transfer to a 3½- or 4-qt. slow cooker on the keep-warm setting.)

Makes 8 servings (½ to ¾ cup each).

Flavor Notes

RED WINE

You can choose any red wine, but we recommend an affordable one that's fruity and not too light, such as Merlot or Zinfandel.

SWEETENER

Start with ¼ cup, then taste after simmering and adjust as desired.

WHOLE SPICES

Choose at least three of the whole spice options. Cinnamon seems essential, but we found every combo to be delicious.

Wine Mix-Ins

Customize your mulled wine by adding any of the following:

SWEETENER

(CHOOSE ONE)

- Maple syrup
- Packed brown sugar
- Honey

WHOLE SPICES

(CHOOSE AT LEAST THREE)

- 2 cinnamon sticks
- 4 to 6 whole cloves
- 3 crushed cardamom pods
- 3 star anise pods
- 6 allspice berries
- 1 to 2 inches sliced fresh unpeeled ginger

GARNISHES

(CHOOSE ONE)

- Fresh cranberries
- Orange slices
- Fresh rosemary sprigs

Spritz, *p. 92*

1938 Buttery Swedish "Sprits" debuted in the mid-'30s, and an endless variety of flavors—pumpkin, mocha, cinnamon-sugar, mint—have graced our pages since.

The BHG Cookie Hall of Fame

We combed through nearly a hundred years' worth of cookie recipes to bring you our favorite ways to spread a little holiday cheer. Santa is going to be very happy this year.

Rubbing the lemon zest into the sugar helps release aromatic oils from the zest.

Lemony Glazed Shortbread Bars, *p. 92*

2007 Attention, lemon-lovers! Calling for ¼ cup each of lemon zest and juice, this citrus shortbread will bring on the pucker.

Luster Dust

Add even more shimmer to your spritz with luster dust. Look in the cake-decorating department of hobby stores for a range of shades. Use a clean, dry artists paintbrush to apply to dry icing.

Spritz

PICTURED ON *P. 90*
HANDS ON 25 minutes
BAKE 8 minutes per batch at 375°F

- 1½ cups salted butter, softened
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1 egg
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 3½ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 recipe Powdered Sugar Icing *(below)* (optional)
- Colored sugar (optional)

1. Preheat oven to 375°F. In a large bowl beat butter with a mixer on medium to high 30 seconds. Add granulated sugar and baking powder. Beat until combined, scraping bowl as needed. Beat in egg and vanilla. Beat in as much of the flour as you can with the mixer. Stir in any remaining flour.
2. Force unchilled dough through a cookie press 1 inch apart onto ungreased cookie sheets. Bake until edges are firm but not brown, 8 to 10 minutes. Remove; cool on a wire rack. If you like, dip tops of cookies in thinned Powdered Sugar Icing, letting excess drip off. Immediately dip in colored sugar. Let stand until set. **Makes 84 cookies.**
PER COOKIE *58 cal, 3 g fat (2 g sat fat), 11 mg chol, 27 mg sodium, 6 g carb, 0 g fiber, 2 g sugars, 1 g pro.*
POWDERED SUGAR ICING Whisk together 6 cups powdered sugar, ⅓ cup light-color corn syrup, ¼ cup milk, and 2 tsp. clear vanilla. If necessary, add additional milk, 1 Tbsp. at a time, to reach desired consistency.

Lemony Glazed Shortbread Bars

PICTURED ON *P. 91*
HANDS ON 40 minutes
BAKE 40 minutes at 300°F

- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- ⅓ cup cornstarch
- 1¼ cups powdered sugar
- ¼ cup lemon zest (6 to 7 lemons)
- 1½ cups salted butter, softened
- 1 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- ½ tsp. vanilla
- 1 recipe Lemony Glaze *(below)*

1. Preheat oven to 300°F. Line a 13×9-inch baking pan with heavy foil, extending foil over edges of pan. Lightly coat foil with *nonstick cooking spray.*
2. In a medium bowl stir together flour and cornstarch. In a small bowl combine powdered sugar and lemon zest. Using your fingers or pressing against side of bowl with a wooden spoon, work lemon zest into powdered sugar until sugar is yellow and very fragrant.
3. In a large bowl beat butter, lemon juice, ½ tsp. *salt,* and the vanilla with a mixer on medium until combined. Gradually beat in sugar mixture. Beat in as much of the flour mixture as you can. Stir in any remaining flour mixture. Continue stirring until dough comes together. Gather dough into a ball. Press dough evenly into prepared pan.
4. Bake 40 minutes. Remove from oven. Immediately spoon Lemony Glaze over top and gently spread evenly over shortbread. Cool in pan on a wire rack. Use foil to lift uncut bars out of pan. Cut into bars. **Makes 32 bars.**
LEMONY GLAZE Whisk together 2½ cups powdered sugar, 2 tsp. lemon zest, 3 Tbsp. lemon juice, 1 Tbsp. corn syrup, and ½ tsp. vanilla until smooth.
PER BAR *181 cal, 9 g fat (6 g sat fat), 23 mg chol, 98 mg sodium, 25 g carb, 0 g fiber, 14 g sugars, 0 g pro.*

Chai Pinecones

HANDS ON 30 minutes
BAKE 8 minutes per batch at 375°F

- ½ cup salted butter, softened
- ⅓ cup granulated sugar
- 1 recipe Chai Spice *(opposite)* or purchased chai spice
- 1 egg
- 1½ tsp. vanilla
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- ¼ cup sliced almonds
- 3 oz. bittersweet or semisweet chocolate, chopped
- ½ tsp. shortening
- Powdered sugar (optional)

1. In a large bowl beat butter with a mixer on medium to high 30 seconds. Add granulated sugar, Chai Spice, and ¼ tsp. *salt.* Beat until combined, scraping bowl as needed. Beat in egg and vanilla. Beat in flour. Cover and chill dough until easy to handle, 30 to 60 minutes.
2. Preheat oven to 375°F. On a lightly floured surface roll dough to ¼ inch thick. Using a 2½- to 3-inch teardrop-shape or oval cookie cutter, cut out dough. Arrange cutouts 1 inch apart on ungreased cookie sheets. Insert almonds at an angle on cutouts to resemble pinecones, leaving about ½ inch at the wide end uncovered.
3. Bake until set, 8 to 10 minutes. Cool on cookie sheets 1 minute. Remove; cool on a wire rack.
4. In a small bowl combine chocolate and shortening. Microwave 1 minute or until melted and smooth, stirring once. Dip wide end of each pinecone into melted chocolate mixture. Let stand or chill until set. Lightly sprinkle cookies with powdered sugar (if using). **Makes 24 cookies.**
PER COOKIE *110 cal, 8 g fat (3 g sat fat), 18 mg chol, 58 mg sodium, 10 g carb, 1 g fiber, 4 g sugars, 2 g pro.*

STORING COOKIES

Most cookies and bars can be layered between sheets of waxed paper in an airtight container and stored at room temperature, refrigerated up to 3 days, or frozen up to 3 weeks. Frosted or filled cookies should be stored in a single layer or stored plain then frosted just before serving.

Chai Pinecones

1980 We gave this sophisticated toasted almond pinecone a flavor update with chai masala spices in the buttery dough.

CHAI SPICE

In a small bowl stir together 1 tsp. ground cardamom, ¼ tsp. ground ginger, ¼ tsp. ground cinnamon, and dash ground cloves.

Sugar Cookie Wreaths
1925 Since the earliest issues, readers counted on us for the best sugar cookie recipe. And every year our Test Kitchen tries new formulas to ensure we don't disappoint.

Sugar Cookie Wreaths

For wreaths, dip cookies in Powdered Sugar Icing and allow to dry completely. Then decorate with green Buttercream Frosting in a pastry bag fitted with a leaf tip. Garnish with red hot candies.

HANDS ON 20 minutes **CHILL** 30 minutes
BAKE 7 minutes per batch at 375°F

- **1 cup salted butter, softened**
- **1½ cups granulated sugar**
- **1½ tsp. baking powder**
- **2 eggs**
- **1 tsp. vanilla**
- **3 cups all-purpose flour**
- **Powdered Sugar Icing *(p. 92)***
- **Buttercream Frosting *(below right)***
- **Red hot candies**

1. In a large bowl beat butter with a mixer on medium to high 30 seconds. Add granulated sugar, baking powder, and ½ tsp. *salt.* Beat until combined, scraping bowl as needed. Beat in eggs and vanilla. Beat in as much of the flour as you can. Stir in any remaining flour. Divide dough in half. Cover and chill until easy to handle, 30 minutes.
2. Preheat oven to 375°F. On a lightly floured surface roll one portion of dough at a time to ⅛ to ¼ inch thick. Using 2½-inch round or desired-shape cookie cutters, cut out dough. (If necessary, dip cutters in flour to prevent sticking.) Place cutouts 1 inch apart on ungreased cookie sheets. Reroll scraps as needed.
3. Bake until edges are firm and bottoms are very light brown, 7 minutes. Remove; cool on a wire rack. Decorate as desired with Powdered Sugar Icing, Buttercream Frosting, and/or candies. Makes 50 cookies.
PER COOKIE *86 cal, 4 g fat (2 g sat fat), 17 mg chol, 70 mg sodium, 12 g carb, 0 g fiber, 6 g sugars, 1 g pro.*

BUTTERCREAM FROSTING
In a large bowl beat ½ cup softened salted butter with a mixer on medium until creamy, about 5 minutes. Beat in ½ cup powdered sugar. Add 1 Tbsp. heavy cream and ½ tsp. clear vanilla; beat on low until combined. Gradually beat in 1½ cups additional powdered sugar just until combined. Beat on medium until fluffy, about 5 minutes. Add 2 tsp. additional cream; beat on high 1 minute more.

Giant Ginger Cookies

HANDS ON 40 minutes
BAKE 12 minutes per batch at 350°F

- **4½ cups all-purpose flour**
- **4 tsp. ground ginger**
- **2 tsp. baking soda**
- **1½ tsp. ground cinnamon**
- **1 tsp. ground cloves**
- **1½ cups shortening**
- **2 cups granulated sugar**
- **2 eggs**
- **½ cup molasses**
- **¾ cup coarse sugar**

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. In a medium bowl stir together flour, ginger, baking soda, cinnamon, cloves, and ¼ tsp. *salt.*
2. In a large bowl beat shortening with a mixer on medium 30 seconds. Gradually beat in 2 cups granulated sugar until combined, scraping bowl as needed. Beat in eggs and molasses. Beat in flour mixture.
3. Using a ¼-cup measure, shape dough into 2-inch balls. Roll balls in coarse sugar to coat. Place 2½ inches apart on ungreased cookie sheets.
4. Bake until cookies are light brown and tops are puffed, 12 to 14 minutes. (Do not overbake or cookies will not be chewy.) Cool on cookie sheets 2 minutes. Remove; cool on a wire rack. **Makes 25 cookies.**
PER COOKIE *299 cal, 12 g fat (3 g sat fat), 15 mg chol, 133 mg sodium, 45 g carb, 1 g fiber, 26 g sugars, 3 g pro.*

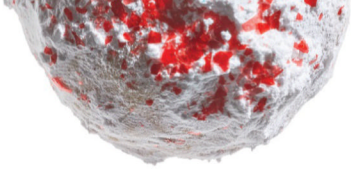
Peppermint Sandies

HANDS ON 30 minutes
BAKE 15 minutes per batch at 325°F

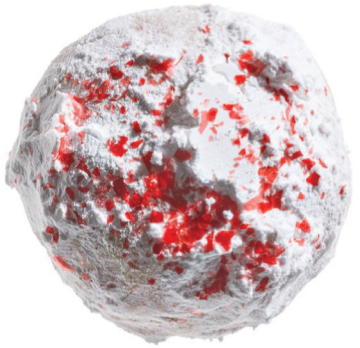
- **1 cup salted butter, softened**
- **⅓ cup powdered sugar**
- **¼ cup finely crushed striped round peppermint candies (about 10) or candy canes**
- **½ tsp. vanilla**
- **½ tsp. peppermint extract**
- **2 cups all-purpose flour**
- **Powdered sugar**
- **Red decorating sugar**

1. Preheat oven to 325°F. In a large bowl beat butter with a mixer on medium 30 seconds. Add the ⅓ cup powdered sugar and the crushed peppermint candies. Beat until combined, scraping bowl as needed. Beat in 1 Tbsp. *water,* the vanilla, and peppermint extract until combined. Beat in as much of the flour as you can with the mixer. Stir in any remaining flour.
2. Shape dough into 1-inch balls. Place balls 1 inch apart on ungreased cookie sheets. Bake until bottoms are light brown, about 15 minutes. Remove; cool on a wire rack. Roll cookies in additional powdered sugar and sprinkle with red decorating sugar. **Makes 48 cookies.**
PER COOKIE *68 cal, 4 g fat (2 g sat fat), 10 mg chol, 31 mg sodium, 8 g carb, 0 g fiber, 3 g sugars, 1 g pro.*

Giant Ginger Cookies
1998 Grand enough to be on the November cover that year, these soft yet chewy spiced molasses gems are bakery-size, but you can make them mini if you like.



Peppermint Sandies
2012 Every cookie exchange needs a bite-size meltaway in the mix. These have the added benefit of being a great way to use up candy canes.



Almond Pastry Pillows
1999 Jarred preserves and prepared almond paste make these Linzer-like cream cheese pastries easier than they look.

Almond Pastry Pillows

HANDS ON 40 minutes **BAKE** 10 minutes per batch at 375°F

- **1 cup salted butter, softened**
- **1 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened and cut up**
- **2 cups all-purpose flour**
- **¼ cup raspberry, strawberry, or cherry preserves**
- **¼ cup almond paste**
- **1 egg, beaten**
- **Coarse sugar or pearl sugar**

1. In a medium bowl beat butter and cream cheese with a mixer on medium to high until combined. Beat in flour and ¼ tsp. *salt.*

2. Divide dough in half. Cover and chill until dough is easy to handle, at least 1 hour.

3. Preheat oven to 375°F. On a lightly floured surface roll one portion of dough at a time to ⅛ inch thick. Cut dough into 2-inch squares. Place half of the squares 1 inch apart on ungreased cookie sheets. Place a scant ¼ tsp. each preserves and almond paste in the center of each square. If you like, using a very small cookie cutter, cut out centers of remaining squares.

4. In a small bowl whisk together beaten egg and 1 Tbsp. *water.* Brush edges of squares on the cookie sheets with egg mixture. Top each with a remaining dough square. Using a fork, gently press edges to seal. Brush tops of pillows with egg mixture. Sprinkle lightly with sugar.

5. Bake until golden, 10 to 12 minutes. Remove; cool on a wire rack. **Makes 52 cookies.**

PER COOKIE *77 cal, 5 g fat (3 g sat fat), 17 mg chol, 55 mg sodium, 6 g carb, 0 g fiber, 2 g sugars, 1 g pro.*

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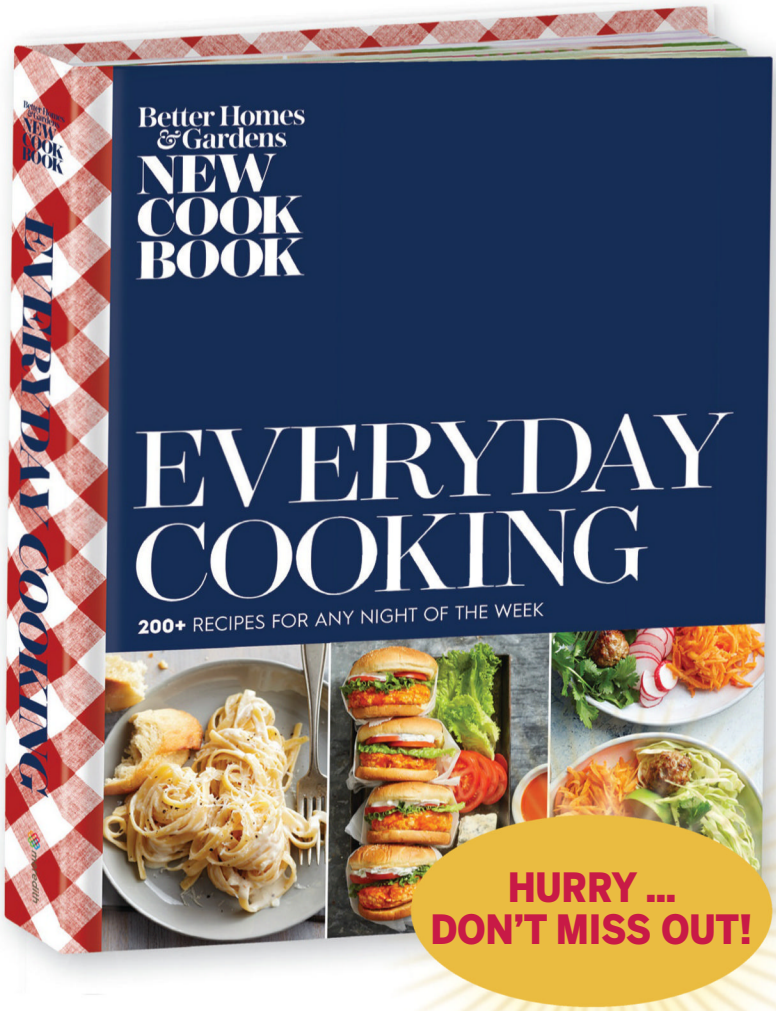

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